

EXHIBIT G

January 20, 2022 Hearing Transcript

1 UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT

2 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

3 Case No. 18-23538-rdd

4 - - - - - x

5 In the Matter of:

6

7 SEARS HOLDING CORPORATION ET AL.,

8

9 Debtors.

10 - - - - - x

11

12 United States Bankruptcy Court

13 300 Quarropas Street, Room 248

14 White Plains, NY 10601

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17 January 20, 2022

18 2:10 PM

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21 B E F O R E :

22 HON ROBERT D. DRAIN

23 U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

24

25 ECRO: ART

1 HEARING re Status Update on Debtors; Progress Towards
2 Effective Date.

3
4 HEARING re Notice of Hearing on Interim Applications for
5 Allowance of Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses on
6 January 20, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. (ECF #10171)

7
8 HEARING re Monthly Fee Statement Ninth Interim Fee
9 Application of Prime Clerk LLC, as Administrative Agent to
10 the Debtors, for Services Rendered and Reimbursement of
11 Expenses for the Period from July 1, 2021 through October
12 31, 2021 filed by Prime Clerk, LLC. (ECF #10162)

13
14 HEARING re Application for Interim Professional Compensation
15 /Sixth Interim Fee Application of Henick, Feinstein LLP as
16 Special Conflicts Counsel to the Official Committee of
17 Unsecured Creditors for Allowance of Compensation for
18 Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses for the
19 Period of July 1, 2021 through October 31, 2021
20 for Herrick, Feinstein LLP, Special Counsel, period:
21 7/1/2021 to 10/31/2021, fee:\$76,275.00, expenses:
22 \$30,428.89. filed by Herrick, Feinstein LLP. (ECF #10156)

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1 HEARING re Application for Interim Professional Compensation
2 Eighth Joint Application of Paul E. Harner, as Fee Examiner
3 and Ballard Spahr LLP, as Counsel to the Fee Examiner, for
4 Interim Allowance of Compensation for Professional Services
5 Rendered and Reimbursement of Actual and Necessary Expenses
6 Incurred from July 1, 2021 through October 31, 2021 for Fee
7 Examiner, Other Professional, period: 7/1/2021 to
8 10/31/2021, fee:\$276793.00, expenses: \$0.00. filed by Fee
9 Examiner. (ECF #10161)

10 .

11 HEARING re Application for Interim Professional
12 Compensation/Ninth Application of Weil, Gotshal & Manges
13 LLP, as Attorneys for the Debtors, for Interim Allowance of
14 Compensation for Professional Services Rendered and
15 Reimbursement of Actual and Necessary Expenses IncmTed from
16 July 1, 2021 through and including October 31, 2021 for
17 Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, Debtor's Attorney, period: 7
18 /112021 to 10131/2021, fee:\$2,517,997.00, expenses:
19 \$148,882.59. filed by Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP. (ECF
20 #10160)

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1 HEARING re Objection to Motion FOR COMPENSATION BY (1) AKIN
2 GUMP HAUER & FIELD LLP [Doc. 10154]; (2) FTI CONSULTING INC.
3 [Doc. 10155]; AND (3) WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES LLP [Doc.
4 10160] (related document(s)10160, 10154, 10155) filed by
5 Alexander Tiktin on behalf of Orient Craft Ltd. (ECF #
6 10191)

7
8 HEARING re Application for Interim Professional Compensation
9 // Ninth Interim Fee Application of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer
10 & Feld LLP as Counsel to the Official Committee of
11 Unsecured Creditors for Allowance of Compensation for
12 Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses for the
13 Period of July 1, 2021 Through and Including October 31,
14 2021 for Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Creditor Comm.
15 Aty, period: 711/2021 to 1013112021, fee:\$839,969.00,
16 expenses: \$287,232.21. filed by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer &
17 Feld LLP. (ECF #10154)

18
19 HEARING re Objection to Motion FOR COMPENSATION BY (1) AKIN
20 GUMP HAUER & FIELD LLP [Doc. 10154]; (2) FTI CONSULTING INC.
21 [Doc. 10155]; AND (3) WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES LLP [Doc.
22 10160] (related document(s)10160, 10154, 10155) filed by
23 Alexander Tiktin on behalf of Orient Craft Ltd. (ECF #
24 10191)

25

1 HEARING re Application for Interim Professional Compensation
2 // Ninth Interim Application of FTI Consulting, Inc.,
3 Financial Advisor to the Official Committee of Unsecured
4 Creditors of Sears Holdings Corporation, et al. for Interim
5 Allowance of Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses for
6 the Period from July 1, 2021 Through October 31, 2021 for
7 FTI CONSULTING, INC., Other Professional, period: 7/112021
8 to 1013112021, fee:\$266,139.00, expenses: \$0.00. filed by
9 FTI CONSULTING, INC. (ECF #10155)

10

11 HEARING re Objection to Motion FOR COMPENSATION BY (1) AKIN
12 GUMP HAUER & FIELD LLP [Doc. 10154]; (2) FTI CONSULTING INC.
13 [Doc. 10155]; AND (3) WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES LLP [Doc.
14 10160] (related document(s)10160, 10154, 10155) filed by
15 Alexander Tiktin on behalf of Orient Craft Ltd. (ECF #
16 10191)

17

18 HEARING re Motion for Objection to Claim(s) Number: 20138
19 and 26385 of the North Carolina Department of Revenue (ECF
20 #9985)

21

22 HEARING re Response to Motion (related document(s)9985)
23 filed by Matthew Sommer on behalf of North Carolina
24 Department of Revenue (ECF #10163)

25

1 HEARING re Motion to Compel I Motion to Enforce the Order
2 (I) Authorizing Assumption and Assignment of Lease with MOAC
3 Mall Holdings LLC and (II) Granting Related Relief filed by
4 Richard A. Chesley on behalf of Transform Holdco LLC (ECF #
5 10194)

6
7 HEARING re Motion to File Under Seal/ Motion of Transform
8 Holdco LLC for Leave to File Under Seal Portions of
9 Transform Holdco LLC's Motion to Enforce and Accompanying
10 Exhibits filed by Richard A. Chesley on behalf of Transform
11 Holdco LLC. (ECF #10193)

12
13 HEARING re Order to Show Cause signed on 12/28/2021 why an
14 answer with attorney representation has not been filed by
15 Defendant, Grace and Son Construction Company of Greenville,
16 Inc. and why Defendant has not retained counsel to represent
17 it in this adversary proceeding (ECF #7)

18
19 HEARING re Notice of Agenda of Matters Scheduled for Hearing
20 to be Conducted Through Zoom on January 20, 2022 at 2:00
21 p.m.

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24
25 Transcribed by: Sonya Ledanski Hyde

1 A P P E A R A N C E S :

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20 BY: DAVID DYKHOUSE (TELEPHONICALLY)

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1 don't need to stay on either.

2 MS. MORABITO: Thank you, Your Honor.

3 THE COURT: Okay, very well. So, let's go back to
4 the Transform Hold Co.-MOAC Mall motion.

5 MR. MARTIN: Good afternoon, Your Honor, this is
6 Craig Martin from DLA Piper, representing Transform. Can
7 you see and hear me all right?

8 THE COURT: Yes, fine, thanks.

9 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

10 MR. OTSUKA: Good afternoon, Your Honor. This is
11 Greg Otsuka for MOAC Mall Holdings. Also with me on the
12 Zoom hearing is David Dykhhouse of the Patterson Belknap
13 Firm. Your Honor, I would just note that I filed my pro hac
14 vice application on January 10. I have not seen an order
15 yet granting that motion, but I would ask the Court's
16 permission to appear and argue today?

17 THE COURT: Okay. Did you email it to chambers
18 with a proposed order?

19 MR. OTSUKA: I did, Your Honor.

20 THE COURT: Okay. It's probably already been
21 sent, or if it won't, it will get entered very shortly. So,
22 you can certainly argue today.

23 Okay. I have reviewed the pleadings related to
24 this motion. And the first one is Transform's motion to
25 file portions of its motion under seal. The parties didn't

1 exactly file my procedures for a ceiling motion; namely, to
2 provide me, by email, with the motion, the unredacted
3 document and the proposed order. But I've reviewed the
4 unredacted documents and the redactions. And I'll note that
5 I don't believe there is any opposition to the sealing
6 motion, and that, in fact, MOAC has tried to comply with the
7 relief that was sought, but redacting certain portions of
8 its objection.

9 So, my inclination, unless anyone has anything
10 more to say about this, is to enter an order directing the
11 sealing of the motion papers and the objection, and having
12 the redacted versions be the only versions on the public
13 docket of the case.

14 Those types of orders are always subject to
15 someone's seeking to reopen the matter. But frankly, this
16 is not particularly a matter of public note. I think it
17 really does fit very cleanly into what 107(b) generally
18 deals with, which is commercial information; the disclosure
19 of which could put a party at a disadvantage.

20 And so, again, I'm inclined to grant the motion.
21 Does anyone have anything to say about it?

22 MR. MARTIN: Your Honor, this is Craig Martin.
23 Mr. Otsuka and I did confer prior to the hearing, and we're
24 grateful for Your Honor inuring that; we thought you might,
25 in lack of the opposition. And we think that we can conduct

1 the hearing without any need to seal anything that we're
2 going to argue today. So, I'll simply refer to the
3 subtenant as 'Subtenant.' And much of what we needed to
4 redact, is not going to be relevant for today's hearing; if
5 it is, we'll address it. But we did confer, and I think we
6 can cover it without sealing the hearing or any portion of
7 the transcript.

8 THE COURT: Okay, very well. So, I'll ask you
9 then, Mr. Martin, to email the sealing order to chambers.

10 MR. MARTIN: We will do so after the hearing, Your
11 Honor. Thank you.

12 THE COURT: Okay. So, then we have the underlying
13 motion and the opposition. I guess, the first thing I want
14 to ask is, has there been any development on the motion for
15 a stay under Federal Appellate Rule 41 of the issuance of
16 the mandate?

17 MR. OTSUKA: Your Honor --

18 MR. MARTIN: Go ahead, Mr. Otsuka.

19 MR. OTSUKA: Sorry, Your Honor. Greg Otsuka. The
20 only development is that, that motion is currently in
21 briefing in the second circuit. We filed the motion.
22 Transform has filed the response. We have time to file a
23 reply. But as of now, that motion is pending.

24 THE COURT: Okay. All right. So, I'm happy to
25 hear brief oral argument on this. I guess I'd like the

1 parties to focus first, though, on the stipulation and order
2 from the District Court, so ordered in March of 2020, by
3 then Chief Judge McMahon, and how it affects the motion now
4 before me.

5 MR. MARTIN: Yes, Your Honor. If it pleases the
6 Court, I'd be happy to go first on our view on that.

7 THE COURT: Okay.

8 MR. MARTIN: Craig Martin, again, for the record.
9 So, our view on that is -- and I think if you look -- it's
10 important to understand the context in which that order was
11 entered. Initially, we argued in front of the District
12 Court, the substance of the motion, and MOAC prevailed on
13 that. And that consent and stipulation order was then
14 entered.

15 After it was entered, we then filed a motion for
16 rehearing, which was granted. That resulted in MOAC filing
17 an appeal on the rehearing motion, and that's what we argued
18 to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

19 The problem with the consent order is that in
20 paragraph 2, it says that it would be, remain in place until
21 the Second Circuit Rules, which has occurred. As MOAC
22 points out in their briefing, I believe it's paragraph 6,
23 says that that order would not terminate until the mandate
24 issues.

25 THE COURT: Paragraph 5.

1 MR. MARTIN: Yeah, paragraph 5, I apologize. I
2 think the key is, is that in the actual Second Circuit
3 judgment, in their very last footnote, they talk about how,
4 because of the way in which the District Court judgments and
5 orders were entered, there never was a judgment entered.
6 And that as a result, that consent and stay order ceased to
7 have effectiveness.

8 Because, the way I read their footnote is, number
9 one, it related to the original judgment of the District
10 Court, which was vacated by the order on the rehearing. And
11 number two, because under the various rules of procedure,
12 had a judgment been entered by the District Court on the
13 rehearing order, that judgment wouldn't become final in 150
14 days; which time has passed. And the consent order would
15 have lost its efficacy.

16 So, our view is that for those two reasons,
17 indicated by the Second Circuit in its footnote, in its
18 summary order, disposing of the matter, the consent order
19 and stipulation does not have any effect any longer.

20 And if Your Honor needs me to direct it to you,
21 would be happy to --

22 THE COURT: Well, I'm looking for it here. Can
23 you just read it? Rather than my leafing through here, can
24 you read that note?

25 MR. MARTIN: Yes. I'm reading from Exhibit F of

1 our motion. It's the final page, footnote 3. It's quite a
2 long one. But in essence, it says that the District Court's
3 May 11, 2020 order granting Transforms motion for rehearing,
4 and vacating the Court's original decision in favor of MOAC,
5 in its June 8, 2020 order denying MOAC's motion for
6 rehearing, and directing the District Clerk of Court, in
7 effect, to close the case; together constitute a final
8 decision that, quote, "Ended the litigation of the merits
9 and left nothing for the Court to do but execute the
10 judgment." Citing Hall v. Hall, in 28 USC 12 91.
11 Parenthetical omitted.

12 Continuing. We appreciate that on March 11, 2020,
13 the District Court entered a stay of what it described as
14 its initial judgment in favor of MOAC. The District Court
15 may well have thought that the stay remained in place, after
16 it later granted Transform's motion for a rehearing. We
17 note, however, that no judgment of the District Court was
18 ever actually set forth in a separate document at any point.
19 Of course, in the absence of a separate document, judgment
20 is deemed entered 150 days after the order from which the
21 appeal lies and is entered, citing Federal Rule of Civil
22 Procedure 58(c)(2)(B). But we will repeat our strong
23 suggestion that where, quote, "The district Court makes a
24 decision intended to be final, the better procedure is to
25 set forth the decision in a separate document called a

1 judgment." Citations omitted.

2 That's the complete footnote, Your Honor. So, as
3 we read that, as I say, we believe the Second Circuit is
4 pointing out that the consent stay and stipulation expired
5 by operation of the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure
6 governing final judgments issued by District Court, up to
7 the Second Circuit.

8 THE COURT: For one of jurisdiction, in essence, I
9 guess, right?

10 MR. MARTIN: I suppose so. You know, you always
11 to hate to second guess anything any party's done. But
12 certainly is MOAC is concerned about a further stay, they
13 could have sought that from the Second Circuit.

14 And that's why I wanted to put that consent
15 stipulation in context. It was originally entered on a
16 motion in which Transform had lost the appeal. And so, the
17 design behind it, in my mind -- Mr. Otsuka may disagree --
18 but it was to protect us from not being able to continue to
19 pursue subleases. Of course, we've now obtained a sublease.
20 And then, when the rehearing happened, neither party did
21 anything with respect to that. And I construe the Second
22 Circuit is saying, because of neither party doing anything,
23 and because the District Court didn't enter any judgment, to
24 the extent that stay remained valid, it expired under
25 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 58, 150 days after the

1 District Court's judgment. And that time period passed long
2 ago. The appeal was pending for quite some time in the
3 Second Circuit.

4 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Otsuka, you want to address
5 that point, and then we can go onto the other ones?

6 MR. OTSUKA: I would Your Honor. Thank you. A
7 few points: The first is, except for the first sentence or
8 two of Mr. Martin's argument that he just made, none of that
9 argument appears in their briefing. We raised this issue in
10 our response.

11 In their reply, it's one paragraph on page 7 of
12 the reply. And they hang their hat on the phrase in
13 paragraph 2, of this order that says, "Until any ruling of
14 the Second Circuit of Appeals."

15 So, the first point is, the rest of that argument
16 has not been made and should not be allowed right now.

17 In any event, the order of the District Court
18 says, "Judgment of this Court shall be stayed." It doesn't
19 refer to any -- the judgment that was just entered, at the
20 time of this order. As Mr. Martin pointed out, after
21 Transform lost on the merits in the District Court, they
22 asked our consent to enter into this stay. And it was only
23 after we agreed and then -- that the Court entered this
24 stay.

25 And then, the very next day, Transform, for the first time,

1 raised this jurisdictional argument; which as we point out
2 in our papers, they assured this Court that they would not
3 make it on any later appeal. So, in our view, this order
4 clearly stays the judgement of the District Court. It
5 doesn't refer to only the first judgement, and moreover, it
6 is also clear that the stay is in place until the sending
7 down of the mandate of the Second Circuit, which hasn't
8 happened.

9 THE COURT: I -- I agree with you on those points.
10 I think that if you just stopped in paragraph three, I
11 wouldn't, but it seems to me that paragraph five is -- is in
12 keeping with what you just said. But, I guess that leaves
13 the issue addressed in the footnote to the Second Circuit's
14 decision, which is I think a pretty strong indication that
15 the Circuit doesn't believe this stay is in effect at this
16 point.

17 MR. OTSUKA: Well, I would also say, Your Honor,
18 that it was a footnote after -- I think it's a footnote to
19 the word affirmed. So it's clearly dicta. They don't say -
20 -

21 THE COURT: It's from the Second Circuit.

22 MR. OTSUKA: I -- I understand.

23 THE COURT: I'm not that pretty -- I'm not that
24 eager to just ignore it.

25 MR. OTSUKA: And I'm not suggesting that you

1 ignore it, Your Honor. But I also point out that they don't
2 come out and say this order is not effective. They -- they
3 -- they -- they make comments about the order --

4 THE COURT: No, but the do -- but they do say the
5 judgement is -- is -- that in essence it's -- it's done.
6 Now they -- I think they can reconsider that, or rethink
7 that as part of the briefing on the stay of the mandate, the
8 requested stay of the mandate, but -- but at least as far as
9 what I have before me right now, it doesn't seem to me like
10 they would be holding the parties to this stipulated order.

11 MR. OTSUKA: Well, the other point I would make,
12 Your Honor, is whatever the judgement -- whatever the
13 effectiveness the judgement may have, the terms of this
14 order say that the stipulation made itself, shall remain in
15 place until the standing down of the mandate. What we're --
16 what we are relying on is in paragraph three, that Transform
17 shall not do a number of things, and as long as the mandate
18 is not issued, this stipulation remains in place and
19 Transform shall not do all of those things that are
20 identified in paragraph three.

21 THE COURT: Well, again though, but if -- if -- if
22 the -- the court that so ordered it can't enforce it, I'm
23 not sure that means anything. But let me ask a related
24 question, and this is to both of you. The -- the sublease
25 has a -- a provision that talks about when the lease term

1 commences, Section 1.2, which refers to the litigation
2 resolution date, and then that definition of litigation
3 resolution references another definition, the "critical
4 determination". And regardless of whether this -- this
5 stipulation is a binding order; this is really I guess a
6 question for Mr. Martin first. Why isn't the lease -- the
7 sublease itself one that contemplates the term commencing
8 only when you have a final order, as people define final
9 orders, i.e. it -- it doesn't admit of any rehearing,
10 reconsideration, transfer or appeal, and any further
11 possibility of any stay, remand, removal, rehearing,
12 reconsideration, transfer, or appeal resulting in the
13 critical determination; and I guess, in light of that, given
14 that there is a pending motion under Rule 41D to stay the
15 mandate and the possibility of a cert petition after that.
16 The -- the relief you're seeking here, ultimately, it would
17 occur to me doesn't -- doesn't -- doesn't -- the lease
18 doesn't start -- the sublease doesn't start until that
19 process is done. So, I guess ultimately the question I have
20 is why are we here at this point?

21 MR. MARTIN: Yes. Craig Martin, again, for the
22 record. I don't disagree with the way that, Your Honor, is
23 reading it that the litigation resolution is the date by
24 which various events would begin to occur that would lead to
25 occupancy. The reason we're here today, however, is because

1 of the assignment order that, Your Honor, entered after our
2 trial, ECF Number 5074 had certain conditions in it that we
3 needed to satisfy within certain time periods.

4 The two that we're worried about, specifically,
5 and that we submit we have satisfied, is that the -- we've
6 given the MOAC in it's capacity as a Landlord it's rights
7 under Section 6.3 of the Master Lease. And the second item
8 that we're concerned about is that, Your Honor's order,
9 signed an order required that we at least lease some portion
10 of the property subject to the Master Lease.

11 THE COURT: Well, except it really wasn't -- I --
12 I read that provision a little differently than -- than I
13 think you do, and maybe you're being extra careful about it.
14 But -- and I -- I go back to the transcript. The -- the two
15 year limitation came up because this was a very long term
16 lease and there was 70 more years left to run on it. And --

17 MR. MARTIN: Correct.

18 THE COURT: -- under the case law, I was concerned
19 that if it just remained -- if you said to, or left MOAC to
20 believe that you were perfectly content to leave the space
21 empty for 70 years, they would be forced to pay you
22 something and I didn't believe that was right under the case
23 law. And during oral argument, one of your colleagues,
24 counsel for Transform, said well, we think we will get it
25 leased within two years. That's a reasonable time. There

1 was testimony to that effect and so long as the landlord
2 didn't block us from doing that. And obviously that
3 testimony and the two years didn't take into account two
4 years of appeals.

5 MR. MARTIN: Or a -- or a pandemic -- global
6 pandemic.

7 THE COURT: Well, that's a separate issue. I -- I
8 really, that -- I mean, it was on the condition that the
9 landlord not interfere. And, you know, it's my order. It's
10 my -- I understand my logic behind it and the logic was to
11 give you all two years to lease it, starting when you had
12 the opportunity to do so. Not, you know, two years would
13 run while you were prevented to do it. It seems to me that
14 that type of relief, if the circuit does not grant the --
15 issues the mandate, does not grant the stay, makes sense to
16 fix that. I mean, it's just contrary to the premise of the
17 order that, again, was that when your hand is free, you
18 should have two years to litigate. It wasn't a question of,
19 you know, the landlord, you know, like telling perspective
20 tenants not to talk to you. I mean, that would have been
21 interference. But the concept was you had two years to do
22 it. Not that you would have two weeks to do it after two
23 years of appeal -- a year and -- almost two years of
24 appeals.

25 MR. MARTIN: Yes. Craig Martin again, Your Honor.

1 And just to comment on that, and I -- and I appreciate what
2 you're saying because it sounds like what you're saying that
3 we might have two years from the completion of appeals,
4 which, obviously --

5 THE COURT: Right.

6 MR. MARTIN: -- would be much more time --

7 THE COURT: That's right.

8 MR. MARTIN: Our concern obviously was calculating
9 it from the entry of the order --

10 THE COURT: Right.

11 MR. MARTIN: -- put us -- actually put us into
12 September of last year. We -- you may have seen in the
13 documents we submitted, we did as --

14 THE COURT: You got an extension from the Second
15 Circuit.

16 MR. MARTIN: Yeah, we did ask for 60 days after
17 their ruling, and they gave that to us. We calculate that
18 to be February 15th, so obviously this is a very valuable
19 lease. We don't want to take any chance that we somehow
20 lose this -- this piece of property that we acquired due to
21 the passage of time. So --

22 THE COURT: Well --

23 MR. MARTIN: -- obviously our proposed form of
24 order has a paragraph 3C that says that we've satisfied the
25 contingency by entering into the sublease so that we don't

1 have to worry about the two year time period.

2 THE COURT: Right, but that's -- that's a good --
3 see that's why I think our interpretation's a little
4 different. It's not really satisfy the contingency; it's
5 just saying that this was -- that deadline was not -- I
6 didn't contemplate that deadline under these facts. That's
7 it --

8 MR. MARTIN: Okay.

9 THE COURT: But -- then I -- I guess I want to go
10 to a related point. The Circuit already gave Transform
11 extra time, visa ve the lease. It has before it a motion
12 for a stay of the mandate. Any court, including the
13 Circuit, can condition stay on various things. They
14 condition it on posting a bond, if there's a risk, for
15 example, you lose the sublease, just because there's a -- a
16 circ petition pending. And so the Circuit could say well,
17 we'll grant the stay if you post the bond. It could also
18 say we'll grant the stay as long as the two year condition
19 is extended. And you could certainly related to them this
20 section of the transcript where I say that's, you know, how
21 I viewed my order and it comes right out of the oral
22 argument and the discussion that you should have a full two
23 years to market and sell the lease, or to, you know, as a
24 sublease.

25 Given that that's in front of the Circuit already,

1 with those possibilities, I'm -- I am reluctant to just
2 charge ahead before they rule on the motion for a stay of
3 the issuance of the mandate.

4 MR. MARTIN: I understand that point, Your Honor,
5 Craig Martin, again. So it sounds like that potentially two
6 things that might, Your Honor's read the papers and I'm not
7 going to make a pitch for why we think the current order is
8 final. I understand where, Your Honor's coming from, it
9 seems like there are two options that might help solve the
10 problem. The first would be to invoke the rules in Your
11 Honor's court and set this for a final hearing. The reply
12 brief is due on the 25th and is on the -- is on the 25th,
13 so, you know, we would expect a ruling from the Second
14 Circuit on the stay of the mandate probably by the end of
15 the month, early February. But since we're concerned about
16 that timeline, it may make sense to invoke a Bankruptcy Rule
17 8005. There's also a Federal Rule of thought procedure
18 called Indicative Ruling --

19 THE COURT: Well that's it -- that's actually 8008
20 has the Indicative Ruling.

21 MR. MARTIN: 8008? I'm sorry, I misspoke, yeah.
22 Called Indicative Ruling, which allows us to do what, Your
23 Honor, just said, which is to, you know, write a letter to
24 the Clerk, and say that we had this hearing, provide the
25 transcript, and say that you've indicated your thoughts on

1 this record. I guess the one portion of that rule that's
2 not clear from this record is whether you would actually
3 grant our proposed order or whether you would clarify the
4 two year time frame to be two years from completion of, you
5 know, exhaustion of appeals, which would either be when the
6 mandate doesn't issue, I suppose, or if the Second Circuit
7 stays the mandate and the Supreme Court grants Cert -- it
8 could be, you know, we all know how long that takes, it
9 could be another couple of years. We just don't want to
10 lose our lease while that -- that time is pending; and I'm -
11 - as I'm sure, Your Honor, appreciates, there's some
12 confusion over when that deadline runs. We -- we believe
13 we've satisfied the requirements with the 6.3A offer as,
14 Your Honor has seen in the exchange of letters from November
15 and December, and that we've satisfied the contingency. But
16 --

17 THE COURT: Well --

18 MR. MARTIN: -- if, Your Honor, feels the mandate
19 issue prohibits you from -- from addressing that --

20 THE COURT: Well, there are two aspects of the
21 condition to the -- to the start of the lease. There's the
22 litigation contingency, and then there's the compliance with
23 the right of first offer, and compliance with the lease
24 itself. And you -- your motion duly seeks determination of
25 both of those points. The objection was premised almost

1 entirely on arguments why the first point, i.e. the
2 litigation contingency, is at best is premature, and at
3 worst something that I don't have the power to rule on.
4 There is a little bit in the objection about the second
5 point, which really said very little -- really it didn't say
6 anything more than the language in the denial letter, which
7 basically questioned whether the proposed subtenant fits
8 within 6.3 and is the type of tenant that can come in. I
9 don't think I'm in a position to give any indicative ruling
10 on that point yet, because I don't really have any evidence
11 other than is submitted in a motion as to the nature of the
12 subtenant's business. It may be fairly easy to decide that
13 issue, but I'm not sure I'm -- I can't give an indicative
14 ruling, I don't think, on that point.

15 I know you think you've made that case pretty
16 clearly, based on other leases that MOAC has granted, et
17 cetera, the nature of this subtenant's -- proposed
18 subtenant's business, et cetera, but -- but it's a different
19 issue than interpreting my own order, which is really the
20 first point.

21 MR. MARTIN: Perhaps the owner, Craig Martin
22 again, may by -- may be some combination of what I said,
23 which is that we make the Second Circuit aware of this and
24 we also adjourn this motion, pending the decision on the
25 mandate, and if the mandate is not stayed, we could then

1 seek a further hearing on these other issues and with the
2 clarity on the timing, we're then not, you know, pressed for
3 some arbitrary deadline where we need that decision or we'd
4 (indiscernible) the lease (indiscernible).

5 THE COURT: Right. Well, I don't want to short
6 circuit, Mr. Otsuka may want to -- may have some remarks on
7 this. I don't to short circuit the arguments that MOAC has
8 made, but I did -- I did want to give you both my
9 preliminary thoughts on the divestiture issue.

10 First, I don't think that the mandate is -- the
11 issuance of the mandate is to be ignored. I think it is a
12 critical step in the appellate process, and until it's
13 issued, with -- with very limited exceptions, the -- the
14 lower court, I don't think has the ability to take an action
15 that would interfere with the appeal process, and I think
16 that's -- that's laid out pretty clearly in the case law on
17 the jurisdictional law. It's discussed in United States v
18 Rivera, 844 F.2nd, 916, 921 (2nd Cir. 1988), and I think
19 even more tellingly in, I wouldn't even try to pronounce it,
20 Y L U G H I O U G H E N Y, an Ohio Coal Company v Milliken,
21 200 F.3rd, 942, 951-52 (6th Cir. 1999) or a hearing on merit
22 denied 2000 US opt Lexus 3382, 6th Circuit, March 2, 2000.
23 Cert denied 531 US 818, 2000.

24 The Abner Coleman case that the reply mostly
25 relies on for the statement that the lower court can act in

1 certain circumstances where the mandate hasn't been issued
2 yet, was one where there was no request for a stay of it,
3 and the district court was up -- up against the speedy trial
4 issue. I think Deep v Boys, which -- which the reply also
5 relies on, pretty much sort of blindly cited the Abner
6 Coleman case with a broader proposition, and the -- the
7 Sixth Circuit case says, yes, even though ministerial, it
8 does have a meaning and I think, particularly where there is
9 a motion for a stay of the mandate, that's important and
10 that take is laid out in the advisory committee notes to
11 Rule 41D. But I'm not sure that gets MOAC to where it wants
12 to go here, because I'm not sure that the divestiture
13 doctrine really applies in this situation, necessarily.
14 There's a good discussion of it in Ray Winimo Realty Corp,
15 270 BR 99, SDNY 2001, also citing that and later cases in
16 another district court opinion Ratcliff v Rancheros Legacy
17 Meat Company, 2020 US District Lexus 127, 276 at 9 through
18 10, District Court Minnesota, July 2021; as well as by Judge
19 Chapman in Ray Sabine Oil and Gas Corp 548 BRF 674, 679,
20 Bankruptcy SDNY 2016.

21 So the -- the point there is that the mere fact of
22 a pending appeal doesn't divest the court of jurisdiction to
23 implement and enforce the order. That flips the burden of
24 getting a stay, pending appeal on its head. You wouldn't
25 have to move for a stay pending appeal, if the very fact of

1 and appeal divested the court of implementing the order it's
2 being appealed from. Instead, the rule makers said no, you
3 have to rule for a stay, pending appeal and win before that
4 happens. What -- what you can't do, under the divestiture
5 doctrine is expand on, or alter the order that's on appeal,
6 or interfere with the appeal. And I -- I think that's an
7 important point. Now, my order authorizing the assumption
8 and assignment of the lease from September 5, 2019, which
9 has the two year limitation in it, isn't really, I don't
10 think the subject of the appeal.

11 I think the subject of the appeal is the -- the
12 district court's determination that 363M deprived it of the
13 ability to reverse my order. On the other hand, this matter
14 is before the district court -- I mean, I'm sorry, it is
15 before the Court of Appeals in the Motion for Stay of the
16 Mandate. They have the ability to condition that request on
17 various things and I think it would be useful for the
18 District Court, for the Circuit Court, excuse me, to -- to
19 know my view of that two year limitation. And I think I
20 have the power to, through you, to let them know of that
21 view under Bankruptcy Rule 8008, which says that if a party
22 files a timely motion in the Bankruptcy Court for relief
23 that the Court lacks authority to grant, because of an
24 appeal, that has been docketed and is pending. The
25 Bankruptcy Court may defer considering the motion, deny the

1 motion, or state that the Court would grant the motion if
2 the court where the appeal is pending remands for that
3 purpose, or state that the motion raises a substantial
4 issue. And then B says the movant must properly notify the
5 clerk of the court when the appeal is pending, if the
6 Bankruptcy Court state that it would grant the motion or
7 that the motion raises a substantial issue.

8 And I think I would grant as modified, the motions
9 request with respect to the two year period, but really, by
10 saying that I don't believe that it applies, under these
11 facts, not because of anything wrong that MOAC did, but
12 because the premise of the two year limitation was that two
13 years was a reasonable time, if Transform was free to do so,
14 to find a tenant. And if it couldn't do so, by that point,
15 adequate assurance would require that it not hold onto the
16 lease anymore.

17 MR. OTSUKA: Your Honor, I didn't want to
18 interrupt. May I be heard on --

19 THE COURT: Sure. Yeah, go ahead, no I wanted to
20 lay that all out on the table. That's not a ruling. I want
21 to lay out my thinking so that you all can respond to it.

22 MR. OTSUKA: Your Honor, on the two year point, I
23 certainly understand that the Court is maybe giving more
24 color describing the Court's reasoning for why the order is
25 entered and it may be interpreting the Court's own order. A

1 couple of things that I would point out, however, in terms
2 of if the Court is inclined to say that the two years
3 doesn't begin to run until any appeal is final, whatever
4 that may mean. Obviously, Transform has been marketing this
5 sublease during this time. That's why they have a signed
6 sublease, right? So it doesn't make sense to me that they
7 should be given two more years when they have spent this
8 time, at least, some of it, probably most of it, marketing
9 and -- and looking for a subtenant, which they believe that
10 they have found a suitable subtenant.

11 THE COURT: Right.

12 MR. OTSUKA: So --

13 THE COURT: That -- can I interrupt you? That's a
14 fair point, but at the same time it has to be enough time so
15 that the deal can be closed -- or a deal can be closed after
16 what would be a reasonable condition, which is that the
17 prospective subtenant is reasonably assured that after it
18 closes, it won't be divested because of some further ruling
19 on appeal. So, I understand.

20 MR. OTSUKA: It --

21 THE COURT: Another two years is -- my point is
22 that the debtor, Transform shouldn't be up against a, you
23 know, an imminent deadline here, because of not its own
24 inability to market the premises but to close, because of
25 the pending appeals.

1 MR. OTSUKA: And I understand that, Your Honor,
2 and I would also point out, as Mr. Martin said and as the
3 Court recognized, the Second Circuit did extend that two
4 year period, and that was with the consent of MOAC.
5 Transform has not sought -- has not asked the Second Circuit
6 to extend that deadline. Maybe with the Court's comments
7 today, it may do so, but my only point is that that request
8 to further extend that deadline has not brought to MOAC, I'm
9 not sitting here today with an answer to that.

10 THE COURT: Right.

11 MR. OTSUKA: But my point is, we did consent for
12 that very reason, that Your Honor is pointing out. We
13 consented to the -- to the Second Circuit extending the
14 deadline out another 60 days. So I guess that's all I would
15 say about the two year time period.

16 THE COURT: Okay. All right.

17 MR. OTSUKA: In -- in terms of the jurisdictional
18 question, I'm not sure how much, Your Honor, wants to --
19 wants to hear on that. I -- I agree and it was -- this was
20 in my notes that what the Court said that a lower court may
21 not expand or alter its prior judgement that's on appeal,
22 and I think quite clearly, that's what Transform seeks here.
23 They're asking the Court, putting aside this -- the question
24 of did they satisfy the -- the two year provision?

25 All the other relief that they're asking for,

1 they're asking the Court to give an opinion on all these
2 other conditions that -- that Transform says it has
3 satisfied. We quite -- quite clearly say they haven't.
4 That -- I'm happy to get into the substance of that, but
5 that is very obviously expanding on the -- on the assignment
6 order. The assignment order --

7 THE COURT: Yes, but --

8 MR. OTSUKA: -- authorized --

9 THE COURT: -- but it doesn't seem to be
10 interfering with it. I mean, if -- if -- if -- see, I
11 actually think that is the type of thing that I could --
12 that aspect, I think I probably could rule on. I'm not sure
13 it's really T'd up for me to rule on today because I think I
14 need to hear some evidence on compliance with the right of
15 first offer and the, you know, and the lease in terms of an
16 acceptable subtenant. But that's -- that's a question that
17 is really, to me, very far removed from whether Section 363M
18 isolates consideration of my order on appeal. I think
19 that's a very different issue. I mean, for example, if --
20 if I had authorized the assumption and assignment of the
21 lease or -- or the -- yeah, the assumption and assignment of
22 the lease and it required ongoing adequate assurance
23 payments, right? Which it did in fact, I mean, it's only
24 \$10.00 a year, plus taxes, but if in year two, Transform
25 didn't pay the taxes and you wanted to enforce that cure

1 payment here as opposed to in Minnesota in state court, that
2 wouldn't interfere with the appeal. I mean, it's separate
3 issue. Say -- similarly with the ability to sublease. I
4 don't see how that interferes with the appeal. It's a --
5 it's a separate issue.

6 MR. OTSUKA: Your Honor, a few things. So first
7 of all, Transform is asking the Court to issue and order
8 that says Transform has prevailed in the litigation
9 regarding assignment of the Master Lease, therefore the
10 Master Lease assignment is fully valid and enforceable.

11 THE COURT: That's -- I -- that's the -- I
12 understand. That point, I understand and that's why I was
13 focusing on the two different issues. I think that --

14 MR. OTSUKA: So may --

15 THE COURT: And the reason they want that decided
16 is they're concerned about the two years. And but --

17 MR. OTSUKA: But Your Honor --

18 THE COURT: -- but they're also asking for a
19 determination that the right of first offer was complied
20 with and -- and -- that -- that and that the lease -- the
21 prospective subtenant is an acceptable tenant under the
22 lease, and to me, that -- that's different than saying all
23 of the litigation is done. Clearly, all of the litigation
24 is done, that's something before the Circuit, whether it's
25 done or not. That's up before the Circuit. That's the

1 process of getting a stay or not of the -- of the -- the --
2 the mandate and -- but that's all occasioned by what I think
3 is a misplaced concern by Transform, that they're up against
4 a deadline that's about to expire and may well expire before
5 Cirt is dealt with, and -- and I think that's a separate
6 issue. But as far as the other --

7 MR. OTSUKA: If you --

8 THE COURT: -- relief they're seeking, while I'm
9 not prepared to do it today, because this is not an
10 evidentiary hearing, I don't see how that interferes with
11 the appellate process.

12 MR. OTSUKA: I -- I'm sorry, Your Honor, just to
13 clarify, when you say the other relief they're seeking,
14 which -- which part of that were you referring?

15 THE COURT: Well, they -- they -- they attach to
16 their motion MOAC's letter which says we don't accept the
17 subtenant, and they want a determination that you've done
18 that improperly, because this is an acceptable subtenant,
19 and that the lease has been complied with. To me that's --
20 that -- that has very little, if anything to do with the
21 appeal. Whereas, if they ask for the determination they're
22 all -- that the litigation contingency is -- is over, well,
23 I think that -- that does have something with the appeal.

24 MR. OTSUKA: I understand.]

25 THE COURT: I mean, how could I tell the Second

1 Circuit that the litigation's over when they have a motion
2 pending before them for a stay of the mandate?

3 MR. OTSUKA: I -- I understand the distinction
4 you're just -- Your Honor's making, and I -- and I
5 certainly agree that there's a difference -- I'm not
6 conceded the same conclusion that, Your Honor, just said,
7 but I do agree that -- that is -- it's not proper for this
8 Court to make the determination that the litigation
9 contingency, as a whole, has been satisfied.

10 THE COURT: Right. Okay.

11 MR. OTSUKA: So -- I -- I don't know where that
12 leaves us right now.

13 THE COURT: Well, I think -- again, where I think
14 it leaves us is I could schedule an evidentiary hearing on
15 the lease compliance issues, if you will. You know, has the
16 right of first offer been complied with and is the proposed
17 subtenant a tenant that could be rejected by the landlord.
18 I don't want to have -- I mean, we're not having that
19 hearing today, it wasn't scheduled as an evidentiary
20 hearing. I don't know when I would have time to do it. I
21 don't know if anyone wants to take discovery on it. But I
22 don't -- I don't think anything more needs to be said on
23 that point today. What I don't believe requires an
24 evidentiary hearing, but which I also believe I should defer
25 on under Rule 8008, is a ruling on the other portion of the

1 motion which, as you said, seeks a determination that the --
2 the contingency has occurred. Which really means the
3 litigation is done. But I think I should state and
4 authorize and direct the movant, Transform, to so inform the
5 Circuit that I believe the two year limitation under my
6 order doesn't apply in these circumstances where the S&E
7 tenant, Transform, has obtained, under what apparently is a
8 -- a fully documented sublease, a tenant, and the only thing
9 impeding that tenant from taking, under the sublease, within
10 the two years is the fact of the pending appeal and -- and
11 litigation occasioned by the landlord's denial of
12 acceptability of the tenant and the right of first offer
13 being complied with. And I think, frankly, because you have
14 a pending motion for a stay of the mandate, if the Circuit
15 wants to grant that stay, it could put conditions on it like
16 extending the two year period, posting a bond, whatever. If
17 it doesn't extend -- if it doesn't stay the mandate, I
18 believe that at that point, I should determine, and I'm
19 telling you know how I will determine it, the two year
20 issue, and -- and determine that that two years doesn't run
21 until the appellate process is finished, with suitable time
22 to close the deal. And we'll leave it at that.

23 I mean, that's the really pressing dispute. That
24 really is a case for controversy. It's very live, I mean,
25 they lose this tenant if -- if that two years runs under the

1 interpretation that I'm not accepting, but I think there
2 should be an order that reflects that. I'm not accepting
3 it. And similarly, the issue of an acceptable tenant is --
4 is live too, and I think I have jurisdiction over it,
5 because it's part of the adequate assurance, you know, I
6 basically said, this has to get done. This part of the
7 assignment of the lease.

8 So I don't want to interfere with what you've T'd
9 up in the Circuit court, but I think they should know how I
10 would rule if they denied the stay and leave it at that.

11 So I would -- I would not dismiss the motion, I
12 would defer consideration of it. I think the parties should
13 discuss whether they need discovery, agree on a discovery
14 schedule, and get a hearing date for an evidentiary hearing,
15 which I think would be no more than half a day, and they can
16 get that from Ms. Lee in the clerks' office. And again, I -
17 - I'm telling you both now that I would make it clear that
18 the two year limitation doesn't apply in this situation
19 where those two issues, namely the acceptable tenant and
20 then right of first offer, have been raised by the landlord,
21 basically right at the end of the two year period, and the
22 appeals process has prevented the closing of what would
23 otherwise be a, you know, a real tenant, sublease. Because,
24 again, that wasn't -- that wasn't what I was addressing in
25 that condition of adequate assurance of future performance.

1 What I was addressing was a situation where Transform
2 literally didn't come up with someone, who was real, within
3 two years and just kept the landlord hanging out there,
4 potentially for up to 70 years, because that was the
5 remainder of the lease, which wasn't -- which I didn't
6 believe fair.

7 MR. OTSUKA: Thank you, Your Honor, if I --

8 THE COURT: So I don't think you needed an order
9 on this at this point. I think obviously you should get the
10 transcript, promptly, and let the Circuit know the result
11 and then you may want to give me a scheduling order or if
12 you're comfortable that you can take whatever discovery you
13 need before the hearing, just schedule the hearing and we'll
14 go ahead with the evidentiary hearing. If it's at any time
15 in the next couple of months, it will probably held
16 remotely. I have a well developed form of remote hearing
17 order and procedure that you can get from Mr. Andino in the
18 Clerks' office that, you know, just help you plan for that.

19 MR. MARTIN: Your Honor, this is Craig Martin.
20 Thank you for that. I think what I've heard you say is on
21 the 8008 indication to the Second Circuit, that we are
22 authorized and directed to do so, and that we can provide
23 the transcript. You won't be doing any type of writing on
24 that --

25 THE COURT: Right.

1 MR. MARTIN: -- so what we'll -- we'll figure out
2 how to do that, and then we will be happy to confer with Mr.
3 Otsuka so that our clients can decide how much discovery
4 they want and then work together to come up with an
5 appropriate hearing date on these other issues that you've
6 identified today.

7 THE COURT: And as -- and as you know from the
8 last evidentiary hearing before me, my practice is to take
9 direct testimony by declaration or affidavit with the
10 witness to be life for cross and redirect. And for the
11 parties to meet and confer and agree on the admissibility of
12 as many exhibits as they, in good faith, can agree on being
13 admissible, and submit a joint exhibit book, along with the
14 witness declarations of direct testimony to chambers a few
15 days before the evidentiary hearing, and a separate binder
16 of any exhibits whose admissibility they want to fight over.

17 MR. OTSUKA: Your Honor, Greg Otsuka, one more
18 time, or at least one more time for now. I heard you say
19 earlier, and I just want to make sure that the -- the
20 transcript is reasonably clear, since there won't be a
21 written order, that -- I heard you say that the two year --
22 in the Court's opinion, the two year deadline shouldn't
23 expire by virtue of the issues that you identified, but that
24 it also is not true that the two years should -- should
25 start over --

1 THE COURT: Yeah --

2 MR. OTSUKA: -- that there should be some
3 reasonable time --

4 THE COURT: There should be a reasonable time to
5 enable the identified transaction to close.

6 MR. OTSUKA: Understood.

7 THE COURT: Okay. I think you're on mute, Mr.
8 Martin, although I don't see the symbol of that, but you're
9 on mute. Maybe it's because you took off your headset? I
10 don't know.

11 MR. MARTIN: A can you -- are you able to hear me?

12 THE COURT: Yeah, now I -- now I can hear you.
13 Yeah.

14 MR. MARTIN: Just to be -- just to be clear on
15 that point, the -- the sublease has a provision that,
16 obviously, we have had a hard time getting a tenant, because
17 of the litigation, and there is a timeline on the litigation
18 resolution of 270 days. It -- so however long this takes,
19 it is foreseeable that our subtenant, if we exceed that time
20 period, would have the ability to exit, and we would
21 effectively be starting over on a subtenant, so -- I
22 understand if you don't want to make a ruling today, two
23 years may be appropriate, depending on what happens. It may
24 not --

25 THE COURT: If you --

1 MR. MARTIN: I don't want to impose that today --

2 THE COURT: I think all I can say at this point is
3 it should be a reasonable time and -- look the Circuit may
4 do all sort -- it may -- it may grant the stay, but it --
5 but impose a bond requirement. You know, there are lots of
6 things that could be done. So I don't want to take that
7 away from them. But I do want to let the know how I viewed
8 this order because it think that's important for them to
9 know. This condition in the order.

10 MR. MARTIN: And I appreciate that. I just wanted
11 it to be clear that we do -- even though the clock that Your
12 Honor -- we thought, Your Honor, set, may not be running, we
13 do have a clock running in our -- in our sublease.

14 THE COURT: A separate deal clock. That -- that's
15 fair and that's something you could raise with the Circuit.
16 I'm just focusing on a reasonable time at this point.

17 MR. MARTIN: Understood and thank you, Your Honor.
18 Unless you have any other question for me, I think we
19 understand where you're coming from and --

20 THE COURT: Okay.

21 MR. MARTIN: -- what steps you would like us to
22 take.

23 THE COURT: All right. Very well. Thank you.

24 MR. OTSUKA: Thank you.

25 MAN 1: Thank you, Your Honor.

1 WOMAN 1: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Okay. I think that concludes the
3 mattes in the Sears case for today, so I'll be signing off
4 at this point. Thanks everyone.

5 MAN 1: Thank you, Your Honor.

6 WOMAN 1: Thank you.

7 (Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at
8 4:00 PM)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certified that the foregoing
transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.



Sonya Ledanski Hyde

Veritext Legal Solutions

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Mineola, NY 11501

Date: January 24, 2022

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& 3:12,17,19 4:2 4:3,10,14,16,20 4:21 5:12,13 7:3 10:20	10193 6:11	2,517,997.00 3:18	300 1:13 73:22
	10194 6:5	2.3 19:24	31 2:12,19 3:6,16 4:13 5:6
	10240 10:25	20 1:17 2:6 6:20 10:14,14 29:9	330 36:11 73:21
	106.1 16:13	20,000 20:13	3382 56:22
0	10601 1:14	200 19:25 56:21	34.5 17:6
0.00. 3:8 5:8	107 39:17	2000 56:22,22,23	363m 58:12 62:17
1	11 43:3,12	20005 8:18	3c 51:24
1 2:11,19 3:6,16 4:1,13,19 5:6,11 7:12 22:1 37:12 71:25 72:1,5,6	1114 14:17	2001 57:15	4
1,068 11:21	112021 3:18	20138 5:18	4 18:6,8
1,560 11:21	1133 9:17	2016 57:20	40 12:7
1.1 17:14	11501 73:23	2019 58:8	41 40:15
1.2 18:16 48:1	12 34:1 43:10	2020 41:2 43:3,5 43:12 57:17	41.3 12:20
1.3 18:16	12/28/2021 6:13	2021 2:11,12,19 2:19 3:6,6,16,16 4:13,14 5:6,6 57:18	41d 48:14 57:11
10 38:14 57:18	1201 9:3	2022 1:17 2:6 6:20 73:25	42 17:20
10.00 62:24	12151 73:6	23 13:2	440 12:17,21 20:1
10.5 34:22	127 57:17	23.4. 17:7	45 20:3 21:17
10/31/2021 2:21 3:8	13 26:5	24 73:25	492 12:11,14
100 14:14	13.1 17:20	248 1:13	4:00 72:8
10019 7:20	1300 8:17	25th 53:12,12	5
10036 7:13 9:18	1350 7:19	26385 5:19	5 28:11 33:21 41:25 42:1 58:8
10112 8:11	148,882.59. 3:19	266,139.00 5:8	50 19:3,22 20:11 20:15,15 21:16,17 22:3 28:14
10131/2021 3:18	15 13:16	27 33:2	507 13:25
1013112021 4:15 5:8	15,000 20:10	270 57:15 70:18	5074 49:2
10153 7:6	15.4 18:14	276 57:17	53.3 18:24
10154 4:2,4,17,20 4:22 5:12,14	150 42:13 43:20 44:25	276793.00 3:8	531 56:23
10155 4:3,4,21,22 5:9,13,14	153 16:11	28 43:10	548 57:19
10156 2:22	159.4 16:11	28.8 17:20	55 13:17
10160 3:20 4:4,4 4:22,22 5:14,14	15th 51:18	287,232.21. 4:16	55437 9:11
10161 3:9	17 17:10,21	2:10 1:18	58 11:22 43:22 44:25
10162 2:12	17.5 34:23	2nd 56:18	58.2 18:2
10163 5:24	17.7 18:11,22,24 19:23 23:1	3	6
10171 2:6	18-23538 1:3	3 4:3,21 5:13 14:17,19 25:3 43:1	6 22:22 24:8,13 41:22
	19801 8:4 9:4	30 8:10 13:3 17:10	6.3 49:7 55:8
	1988 56:18		6.3a 54:13
	199 19:25		
	1999 56:21		
	2		
	2 4:2,20 5:12 17:23 19:24 24:23 37:12 41:20 43:22		

60 51:16 61:14	a	additional 16:22	agenda 6:19 10:4
62 19:8,8	ability 29:1 56:14	16:24 22:16,20	10:8 25:15 36:25
62.6 18:1 24:9	58:13,16 63:3	23:21 30:4 31:2	37:12,20
66 19:8	70:20	33:18	agent 2:9 32:16
674 57:19	able 10:20 18:10	additions 19:21	ago 26:15 45:2
679 57:19	19:16,22 21:16	address 26:12	agree 30:3,23
6th 56:21,22	22:3 37:13 44:18	40:5 45:4	31:19 46:9 61:19
7	70:11	addressed 46:13	65:5,7 67:13
7 3:17 6:17 45:11	abner 56:24 57:5	addresses 26:19	69:11,12
7/1/2021 2:21 3:7	absence 43:19	addressing 54:19	agreed 16:3 28:20
7/11/2021 5:7	absolutely 35:2,7	67:24 68:1	36:17 45:23
70 21:19 49:16,21	accept 64:16	adequate 59:15	ahead 10:17 36:5
68:4	acceptability	62:22 67:5,25	40:18 53:2 59:19
711/2021 4:15	66:12	adjourn 55:24	68:14
75 19:5	acceptable 62:16	admin 37:9	akin 4:1,9,14,16
76 13:17	63:21 64:18 67:3	administrative	4:19 5:11 7:10
76,275.00 2:21	67:19	2:9 8:16 11:6,7,23	24:7,12 25:23
767 7:5	accepting 67:1,2	14:25 18:12 19:1	32:23
8	access 10:6	19:19,20 20:4,9	al 1:7 5:4 10:4
8 11:22 26:19 43:5	accommodate	21:4,13,15,23	alexander 4:5,23
80 19:6	27:3	22:14 27:22 28:11	5:15
8005 53:17	accommodation	28:12,16 30:8,15	allocate 19:24
8008 53:19,21	30:22	32:16 33:22 34:24	allocated 18:15
58:21 65:25 68:21	accompanying	35:25	allocation 14:3
818 56:23	6:9	admins 35:6	allow 18:15 20:3
8300 9:10	accomplishment	admissibility	20:15
839,969.00 4:15	13:14	69:11,16	allowance 2:5,17
844 56:18	account 13:6	admissible 69:13	3:4,13 4:11 5:5
9	18:11 24:18,19	admit 48:9	allowed 11:22
9 57:17	50:3	admitting 16:22	12:3,4,6,9,21,24
91 43:10	accrual 21:25	advance 11:8	16:10 19:3 45:16
916 56:18	accurate 73:4	22:16,25	allows 53:22
919 8:3	achieving 10:12	adversary 6:17	alter 58:5 61:21
921 56:18	acquired 51:20	37:21	americas 9:17
942 56:21	act 56:25	advisor 5:3	37:19
951-52 56:21	action 24:17	advisors 11:5	amount 15:21
99 57:15	56:14	19:18	16:12 19:3 24:14
99.7 16:14	actual 3:5,15 15:7	advisory 57:10	27:16
9985 5:20,22	42:2	affidavit 69:9	amounts 12:18
	acutely 30:16	affirmed 46:19	15:6 16:10 29:4
	added 18:16 24:8	afternoon 10:2,21	analysis 11:9 17:5
	addition 11:25	24:4,6,11 38:5,10	andino 68:17
	14:20		

announcement 18:9 anomalies 31:25 answer 6:14 23:3 24:12 26:2 61:9 anybody 21:10 anymore 59:16 apart 29:13 apologies 27:8 apologize 42:1 apparently 33:18 66:7 appeal 13:22,25 14:4 16:4 23:16 41:17 43:21 44:16 45:2 46:3 48:10 48:12 50:23 56:15 57:22,24,25 58:1 58:3,5,6,10,11,24 59:2,5 60:3,19 61:21 62:18 63:2 63:4 64:21,23 66:10 appealed 58:2 appeals 13:11 14:1 16:6 41:18 45:14 50:4,24 51:3 54:5 58:15 60:25 67:22 appear 34:17 38:16 appearing 10:7 appears 12:10 45:9 appellate 23:17 40:15 56:12 64:11 66:21 applicants 25:25 26:16 36:23 application 2:9,14 2:15 3:1,2,11,12 4:8,9 5:1,2 29:11 34:5 38:14	applications 2:4 17:12 24:15 25:16 25:20 26:1,9 28:17 29:13 31:20 32:4,15,15,23 34:21 36:20 applies 57:13 59:10 apply 66:6 67:18 appreciate 23:25 34:3 43:12 51:1 71:10 appreciates 54:11 appropriate 23:21 69:5 70:23 approved 28:19 28:20 arbitrary 56:3 argue 38:16,22 40:2 argued 41:11,17 argument 40:25 45:8,9,15 46:1 49:23 52:22 arguments 55:1 56:7 arisen 33:19 arrangements 31:12 art 1:25 aside 61:23 asked 45:22 61:5 asking 28:24 61:23,25 62:1 63:7,18 aspect 62:12 aspects 54:20 asserted 14:19,23 14:24 15:6,10 21:19,21 24:17 asserting 16:2 asset 17:22 19:11	assets 17:11,16,18 17:19 22:18,20 30:18 35:15 assignment 6:2 37:2 49:1 58:8 62:5,6,20,21 63:9 63:10 67:7 assistance 35:11 assuming 26:16 assumption 6:2 37:1,2 58:7 62:20 62:21 assurance 59:15 62:22 67:5,25 assured 46:2 60:17 attach 64:15 attempted 18:20 attention 23:12,14 attorney 3:17 6:14 attorneys 3:13 7:4 7:11,18 8:2,9,16 9:2,9,16 aty 4:15 audio 27:9 audits 16:20,21 authority 58:23 authorize 66:4 authorized 62:8 62:20 68:22 authorizing 6:2 37:1 58:7 available 17:25 19:11 20:11 21:18 22:19 avenue 7:5 9:17 aware 22:22 30:16 55:23 b b 1:21 36:23 39:17 43:22 59:4	back 21:7 27:9 28:6 33:3 35:14 38:3 49:14 balances 17:6 ballard 3:3 8:1 26:11 bankruptcy 1:1 1:12,23 53:16 57:20 58:21,22,25 59:6 based 16:19 18:1 55:16 baseline 19:15 basically 11:20,20 23:12 26:20 35:10 55:7 67:6,21 basis 29:3,4 32:20 32:22 36:19 behalf 4:5,23 5:15 5:23 6:4,10 24:4 24:12 25:25 26:11 28:9 33:10,14 37:9 believe 10:15 19:16 24:13 25:5 31:17 35:9 36:18 39:5 41:22 44:3 46:15 49:20,22 54:12 59:10 60:9 65:23,24 66:5,18 68:6 belknap 9:15 38:12 benefit 13:11 20:8 20:9 21:22 33:24 best 16:19 55:2 better 43:24 beyond 29:9 31:24 big 30:19 34:11 36:2 billing 31:7,24
---	---	--	---

billion 28:11	calculate 51:17	chambers 38:17	14:16,18,21,23,24
bills 27:17	calculating 51:8	40:9 69:14	15:6,9,13,15,25
binder 69:15	calendar 37:18	chance 51:19	16:25 17:8,23
binding 48:5	call 37:11	changed 31:13	18:12,15 19:4,19
bit 19:24 55:4	called 43:25 53:18	chapman 57:19	21:5,9,20 22:15
blame 35:3	53:22	charge 53:2	22:24 23:9,14
blessing 20:25	capacity 49:6	chart 12:10 15:9	24:22,24 25:9,11
blindly 57:5	capped 12:17	18:14	33:19 34:24 35:15
block 50:2	careful 49:13	chesley 6:4,10	35:25 37:9
blown 32:9,11	carefully 36:6	chief 41:3	clarify 54:3 64:13
bond 52:14,17	carolina 5:19,23	cir 56:18,21	clarity 56:2
66:16 71:5	carved 36:15	circ 52:16	claw 28:6
book 69:13	case 1:3 10:6	circuit 14:4 16:4	clean 15:12
books 16:19	27:23 28:2,3	40:21 41:18,21	cleaning 17:8
bottom 14:12 16:9	29:15 30:12 31:14	42:2,17 44:3,7,13	cleanly 39:17
16:12 17:24 33:17	31:18,22 32:13	44:22 45:3,14	clear 29:18 46:6
33:19	37:11 39:13 43:7	46:7,15,21 50:14	54:2 67:17 69:20
boys 57:4	49:18,22 55:15	51:15 52:10,13,16	70:14 71:11
br 57:15	56:16,24 57:6,7	52:25 53:14 54:6	clearly 29:6 36:2
brauner 7:15	66:24 72:3	55:23 56:6,7,22	46:4,19 55:16
24:11,12	cases 20:5,18	57:7 58:18 61:3,5	56:16 61:22 62:3
brf 57:19	22:16 30:21 57:15	61:13 63:24,25	63:23
bridging 34:9	cash 17:5,10,17	65:1 66:5,14 67:9	clerk 2:9,12 32:15
brief 33:10 40:25	17:18,21,25 18:9	68:10,21 71:3,15	43:6 53:24 59:5
53:12	18:9 19:10 35:16	circuit's 46:13	clerks 67:16 68:18
briefing 40:21	category 12:9,24	circumstances	client 33:14
41:22 45:9 47:7	14:16	57:1 66:6	clients 69:3
briefly 34:16	cause 6:13 37:21	cirt 64:5	clock 71:11,13,14
bring 23:11,14	causes 24:17	citations 44:1	close 19:25 21:18
bringing 15:6	ceased 42:6	cited 57:5	28:6 30:10 34:8
brings 13:16	ceiling 39:1	citing 43:10,21	43:7 60:24 66:22
34:15	center 9:10	57:15	70:5
broader 57:6	cert 23:18 48:15	civil 43:21 44:5,25	closed 60:15,15
broadway 7:19	54:7 56:23	claim 5:18 11:15	closer 15:7 34:6
broken 15:3	certain 12:16	13:24	34:21 35:2
brought 61:8	15:15 16:20 23:15	claimant 23:11	closes 60:18
bryant 7:12	39:7 49:2,3 57:1	claimants 20:1	closing 67:22
burden 57:23	certainly 16:22	28:12	coal 56:20
business 55:12,18	38:22 44:12 52:19	claims 8:16 11:6,7	coleman 56:24
c	59:23 65:5	11:16,21,23 12:6	57:6
c 7:1 10:1 43:22	certified 73:3	12:7,8,11,14,17	collateral 36:16
73:1,1	cetera 55:17,18	12:23,25 13:1,4,5	colleague 31:16
		13:7,13 14:12,13	

colleagues 49:23 color 59:24 combination 55:22 come 13:19 15:18 17:15,18,19 18:10 24:9 34:8 37:22 47:2 55:8 68:2 69:4 comes 20:9 52:21 comfortable 68:12 coming 53:8 71:19 comm 4:14 commences 48:1 commencing 48:7 comment 51:1 comments 33:13 34:4,14 47:3 61:6 commercial 39:18 committee 2:16 4:10 5:3 7:11 11:5 19:16,18 21:15 22:14 24:12 32:17 35:12 36:17 57:10 company 6:15 37:23 56:20 57:17 compare 12:5 compel 6:1 compensation 2:5 2:14,17 3:1,4,12 3:14 4:1,8,11,19 5:1,5,11 31:11 33:1 complete 44:2 completely 27:10 30:3 completion 51:3 54:4 compliance 54:22 54:23 62:14 65:15	complied 63:19 64:19 65:16 66:13 comply 39:6 conceded 65:6 concept 50:21 concern 51:8 64:3 concerned 29:11 34:12 36:12 44:12 49:8,18 53:15 63:16 concerns 29:1 concluded 72:7 concludes 72:2 conclusion 65:6 condition 50:8 52:13,14,18 54:21 58:16 60:16 67:25 71:9 conditions 49:2 62:2 66:15 conduct 39:25 conducted 6:20 conducting 16:20 confer 39:23 40:5 69:2,11 confirm 31:17 37:22 confirmation 30:12 35:13,23 confirmed 27:5 conflicts 2:16 32:16 confusion 54:12 consent 19:17 41:13,19 42:6,14 42:18 44:4,14 45:22 61:4,11 consented 61:13 consequently 27:15 conserve 21:4,9 consider 19:2,5 21:7 29:14	considerably 35:21,22 consideration 62:18 67:12 considered 33:7 considering 26:22 58:25 constituents 20:20 22:5 constitute 43:7 construction 6:15 37:23 construe 44:21 consulting 4:2,20 5:2,7,9,12 contemplate 52:6 contemplates 48:7 contemporaneous 16:5 content 11:4 49:20 context 41:10 44:15 contingency 51:25 52:4 54:15 54:22 55:2 64:22 65:9 66:2 continually 24:15 continue 12:22 18:21 21:6 44:18 continuing 22:13 43:12 contrary 50:16 contributed 17:16 control 22:18 23:15 controversial 20:25 controversy 66:24 cooperation 11:10 coordinated 11:3 corp 57:14,19	corporation 1:7 5:4 10:4 correct 27:10 49:17 cost 21:25 23:19 costs 22:6 28:11 counsel 2:16,20 3:3 4:10 6:16 10:9 10:16 22:15,16 26:7 32:16,17 49:24 country 73:21 couple 26:15 54:9 60:1 68:15 course 43:19 44:19 court 1:1,12 10:2 10:22 11:1 14:6 14:10 17:3 18:7 23:5,18,25 24:6 24:21 25:14,19 26:4,13,16 27:7 27:11 28:10,23 29:23 30:6,11 31:4 32:3,14 35:9 36:22 37:4,7,15 38:3,8,17,20 40:8 40:12,24 41:2,6,7 41:12,18,25 42:4 42:10,12,22 43:6 43:9,13,14,17,23 44:6,8,23 45:4,17 45:18,21,23 46:2 46:4,9,21,23 47:4 47:21,22 49:11,18 50:7 51:5,7,10,14 51:22 52:2,9,12 53:11,19 54:7,17 54:20 56:5,14,25 57:3,16,18,22 58:1,14,15,18,18 58:22,23,25 59:1 59:2,5,6,19,23
--	--	--	--

60:2,11,13,21 61:3,10,16,20,20 61:23 62:1,7,9 63:1,7,11,15,18 64:8,15,25 65:8 65:10,13 67:9 68:8,25 69:7 70:1 70:4,7,12,25 71:2 71:14,20,23 72:2 court's 14:3 38:15 43:2,4 45:1 58:12 59:24,25 61:6 69:22 cover 40:6 covering 28:23 craft 4:5,23 5:15 7:18 24:4 25:22 32:24 33:10 craig 9:6 38:6 39:22 41:8 48:21 50:25 53:5 55:21 68:19 credibly 21:5 creditor 4:14 19:20 21:16 33:15 34:25 creditor's 36:16 creditors 2:17 4:11 5:4 7:11 19:1 19:3 20:4,7,16 28:15,16,21,22 30:16 33:23 36:14 critical 48:3,13 56:12 cross 22:3 69:10 cure 62:25 current 22:7 53:7 currently 18:15 20:1 40:20	31:17,19 32:8 date 2:2 10:12 11:4 14:13,15 15:2 19:16,18 21:14 22:14 28:14 29:16 30:17 34:6 35:11 48:2,23 67:14 69:5 73:25 dated 10:14 26:5 david 7:22 9:20 24:3 33:9 38:12 day 45:25 67:15 days 26:15 42:14 43:20 44:25 51:16 61:14 69:15 70:18 dc 8:18 de 8:4 9:4 12:1,3,4 20:6 21:17 22:1 deadline 52:5,6 54:12 56:3 60:23 61:6,8,14 64:4 69:22 deal 25:6 30:13 35:5 60:15,15 66:22 71:14 dealing 13:21 14:22 deals 11:16 39:18 dealt 22:10 23:20 32:24 36:5,7 64:5 debt 16:2 debtor 60:22 debtor's 3:17 10:9 10:11,16 11:2,8 15:19,22 16:16,18 18:8 23:15 33:15 debtors 1:9 2:1,10 3:13 7:4 10:20 15:5,8 16:3 17:21 18:10,20 19:15,17 21:4 22:2,13,17 25:7,11,12 28:10 35:3,11 36:22	december 54:15 decide 55:12 69:3 decided 63:15 decision 43:4,8,24 43:25 46:14 55:24 56:3 declaration 69:9 declarations 69:14 decrease 15:14 17:20 decreased 13:2,3 decreasing 31:21 deemed 43:20 deep 57:4 defendant 6:15,16 defendants 18:19 defer 16:3 58:25 65:24 67:12 deficiency 28:21 define 48:8 definition 48:2,3 delayed 35:5 denial 55:6 66:11 denied 33:2 56:22 56:23 67:10 deny 58:25 denying 43:5 department 5:19 5:24 depending 70:23 deprived 58:12 described 17:12 20:2 43:13 describing 59:24 design 44:17 despite 18:19 details 11:13 determination 29:5 48:4,13 54:24 58:12 63:19 64:17,21 65:8 66:1	determine 29:1 66:18,19,20 developed 68:16 development 40:14,20 deviation 20:22 22:7 dial 21:7 dialing 37:11 diatribes 32:12 dicta 46:19 difference 17:24 65:5 different 21:19 28:23 30:2 33:15 52:4 55:18 62:19 63:13,22 differently 49:12 difficult 18:19 diminishing 13:12 13:20 direct 19:11 42:20 66:4 69:9,14 directed 68:22 directing 39:10 43:6 disadvantage 39:19 disagree 30:25 44:17 48:22 disallow 36:19 disallowed 13:24 disclosed 24:14 disclosure 39:18 discount 16:10 19:4 discovery 65:21 67:13,13 68:12 69:3 discuss 67:13 discussed 21:14 27:23 56:17
d			
d 1:22 10:1 daluz 8:6 26:10 26:10 27:5,9			

[discussing - example]

Page 7

<p>discussing 32:1,5 discussion 34:7 52:22 57:14 discussions 26:23 dismiss 67:11 disparage 28:2 disposing 42:18 dispute 66:23 disputed 12:7,23 13:5,7,13 17:8 21:9 22:24 23:9 35:15 disputes 36:7 distinction 65:3 distribute 22:19 34:22 distribution 12:11 18:11,22 19:7,10 20:8 21:6 22:12 23:7 33:24 34:23 distributions 11:17 12:17,18 13:6 14:13 20:19 35:14 36:14 district 1:2 41:2 41:11 42:4,9,12 43:2,6,13,14,17 43:23 44:6,23 45:1,17,21 46:4 57:3,16,17,18 58:12,14,18 divest 57:22 divested 58:1 60:18 divestiture 56:9 57:12 58:4 divided 11:16 dla 9:1 38:6 doc 4:2,3,3,20,21 4:21 5:12,13,13 docket 10:15,24 10:25 15:12 39:13</p>	<p>docketed 58:24 doctrine 57:13 58:5 document 4:4,22 5:14,22 39:3 43:18,19,25 documented 66:8 documents 39:4 51:13 doesn't 10:6 doing 17:22 20:12 22:17,25 27:15 31:9 32:11 33:4,6 35:12 44:22 50:2 68:23 door 21:2 23:1 draft 32:9 drag 18:21 drain 1:22 10:3 dramatic 17:7 dramatically 13:7 drive 9:10 driven 18:3 driver 16:15 18:18 drogin 7:17 drop 37:13,17 due 51:20 53:12 duly 54:24 duplication 13:24 dykhouse 9:20 38:12</p>	<p>5:15,19,24 6:4,11 6:17 49:2 ecro 1:25 effect 42:19 43:7 46:15 50:1 effective 2:2 10:12 11:4 14:15 19:16 19:18 21:14 22:14 24:10,25 25:3 29:15 30:22 33:12 33:18,20 34:1,6 34:10 35:11 47:2 effectively 70:21 effectiveness 42:7 47:13 efficacy 42:15 efficiencies 20:18 eight 13:1 eighth 3:2 either 15:11 19:5 23:10 31:12 36:19 38:1 54:5 eligible 11:17 12:11,17 15:24 email 38:17 39:2 40:9 emananuel 8:15 emmanuel 37:9 empty 49:21 enable 29:15 30:22 35:13 70:5 encourage 23:13 ended 43:8 enforce 6:1,9 37:1 47:22 57:23 62:25 enforceable 63:10 engage 21:11 23:8 enter 39:10 44:23 45:22 entered 36:24 38:21 41:11,14,15 42:5,5,12 43:13 43:20,21 44:15</p>	<p>45:19,23 49:1 59:25 entering 51:25 entirely 55:1 entitled 14:14,17 25:4 entry 51:9 erika 8:20 37:8 esl 18:1 24:17 36:1 essence 43:2 44:8 47:5 established 20:23 estate 17:14 21:20 33:20 estate's 21:15 estimate 15:19,22 16:13,16 17:14 estimated 16:10 27:16 estimates 15:7 16:18 35:3,19 et 1:7 5:4 10:4 55:16,18 event 45:17 events 48:24 everybody 20:12 20:12 28:5 32:22 everyone's 33:5 evidence 55:10 62:14 evidentiary 64:10 65:14,19,24 67:14 68:14 69:8,15 exactly 27:10 39:1 examiner 3:2,3,7 3:9 8:2,9 25:21 26:8,11,21 27:4 32:17,21 examiner's 26:5,6 26:19,23 27:13 example 52:15 62:19</p>
	<p>e</p> <p>e 1:21,21 3:2 7:1,1 10:1,1 56:20 73:1 eager 46:24 earlier 18:4 20:7 21:3 69:19 early 32:13 53:15 earned 28:6 easy 55:12 ecf 2:6,12,22 3:9 3:19 4:5,17,23 5:9</p>		

<p>exceed 70:19 exceptions 56:13 exchange 54:14 excluding 17:25 excuse 37:5 58:18 execute 43:9 exhaustion 54:5 exhibit 42:25 69:13 exhibits 6:10 69:12,16 exit 70:20 expand 58:5 61:21 expanding 62:5 expect 18:10 31:22,25 34:4 53:13 expected 18:10 expense 30:8,16 37:9 expenses 2:5,11 2:18,21 3:5,8,15 3:18 4:12,16 5:5,8 21:23 29:2 expire 64:4,4 69:23 expired 44:4,24 explain 11:13 extend 61:3,6,8 66:17 extended 52:19 extending 61:13 66:16 extension 51:14 extent 19:22 20:11 22:3 44:24 extra 49:13 52:11</p>	<p>faced 23:16 fact 37:15 39:6 57:21,25 62:23 66:10 facts 52:6 59:11 fail 7:8 10:19,19 10:23 14:8,11 17:4 18:8 23:13 25:2,10,18,24 26:25,25 28:8,8 29:17,21,24 30:1 30:25 34:16 36:21 36:25 37:16 fair 27:13 30:11 60:14 68:6 71:15 fairly 55:12 faith 69:12 false 34:20 35:2,7 familiar 19:13 far 13:9 21:5 29:11 36:4,11 47:8 62:17 64:6 favor 43:4,14 fear 34:17 february 22:10 51:18 53:15 federal 40:15 43:21 44:5,25 53:17 fee 2:8,8,15,21 3:2 3:3,6,8,8,18 4:9 4:15 5:8 8:2,9 14:3 17:12 24:15 25:16,20,21 26:5 26:8 27:3 29:10 29:11,16 31:11,20 31:20 32:3,14,15 32:17,21 feel 37:16 feels 54:18 fees 27:12 29:2 36:20</p>	<p>feinstein 2:15,20 2:22 32:16 feld 4:10,14,17 field 4:2,20 5:12 fifth 7:5 fight 69:16 fighting 16:3 figure 69:1 file 6:7,8 15:11 22:9 23:23 34:13 38:25 39:1 40:22 filed 2:12,22 3:8 3:19 4:4,16,22 5:8 5:14,23 6:3,10,14 10:24 15:15,16,24 17:14 26:15 28:18 38:13 40:21,22 41:15 files 58:22 filing 41:16 final 29:3,11 42:13 43:1,7,24 44:6 48:8,8 53:8 53:11 60:3 financial 5:3 29:7 find 59:14 fine 10:22 17:3 18:7 37:7,15 38:8 finish 29:25 finished 66:21 firm 9:8 24:8 29:14 31:14,24 38:13 firm's 29:7 32:25 firms 26:24 27:14 27:21 28:1,3 29:12 30:9,15,21 31:9 32:2,5,11 36:9 first 12:24 14:16 35:6 38:24 40:13 41:1,6 45:7,7,15 45:25 46:5 48:6</p>	<p>53:10 54:23 55:1 55:20 56:10 62:15 63:6,19 65:16 66:12 67:20 fit 39:17 fits 55:7 five 13:4,13 46:11 fix 50:16 fixed 25:3 flagged 14:1 flagging 16:23 flip 18:5 flips 57:23 focus 41:1 focusing 63:13 71:16 folks 15:20 following 10:25 19:20 footnote 42:3,8,17 43:1 44:2 46:13 46:18,18 forced 18:17 49:21 forefront 34:14 foregoing 73:3 foreign 18:18 foreseeable 70:19 form 20:24 32:10 44:18 51:23 68:16 forth 43:18,25 forward 11:12 12:8 21:4 22:2,6 22:11 27:4 33:16 37:24 found 60:10 four 33:11 34:5 34:15 43:9 fourth 18:11 23:7 fraction 12:12 frame 54:4 frankly 30:13 39:15 66:13</p>
<p>f 1:21 42:25 73:1 f.2nd 56:18 f.3rd 56:21</p>			

free 32:6 50:17 59:13 front 41:11 52:25 fti 4:2,20 5:2,7,9 5:12 32:24 full 11:23 12:1 32:9,11 36:18 52:22 fully 11:20 33:5 63:10 66:8 fund 28:20 36:16 funding 24:19 funds 20:11 21:18 23:21 further 13:11 15:16 16:5 26:1,2 26:14 44:12 48:10 56:1 60:18 61:8 future 12:18 20:19 27:16 29:4 29:16 67:25	global 50:5 go 10:8,17 14:12 21:1 22:2 23:1 24:9,25 25:3,15 29:15 30:22 32:10 33:18,20 34:1 38:3 40:18 41:6 45:5 49:14 52:9 57:12 59:19 68:14 goals 20:17 goes 28:25 going 13:10,11 19:20 21:4 22:6 23:10,16 27:4 31:16 33:12,23 34:5,6,9 37:23 40:2,4 53:7 good 10:2,23,23 11:11 19:15 21:2 24:4,6,11 32:4 38:5,10 52:2 57:14 69:12 gothsal 10:20 gotshal 3:12,17,19 4:3,21 5:13 7:3 25:22 32:23 gotten 13:9 21:5 governing 44:6 grace 6:15 37:23 grant 32:19 34:5 39:20 50:14,15 52:17,18 54:3 58:23 59:1,6,8 66:15 71:4 granted 41:16 43:16 55:16 granting 6:3 38:15 43:3 grants 26:1 54:7 grateful 39:24 greenville 6:15 greg 38:11 40:19 69:17	gregory 9:13 group 25:16 guess 31:4 36:8,14 40:13,25 44:9,11 46:12 48:5,13,19 52:9 54:1 61:14 gump 4:2,9,14,16 4:20 5:12 7:10 24:7,12 25:23 32:24 h h 56:20,20 hac 38:13 half 14:5,11 34:12 67:15 hall 43:10,10 hand 12:18 18:9 50:17 58:13 hang 45:12 hanging 30:12 68:3 happened 44:20 46:8 happens 34:12 58:4 70:23 happy 10:8 20:20 22:4 23:3 26:2 27:3 40:24 41:6 42:21 62:4 69:2 hard 70:16 harner 3:2 8:13 26:7,11 27:8,18 28:9,24 29:6,20 30:1,23 31:16 harner's 33:13 hat 45:12 hate 37:6 44:11 hauer 4:2,9,14,16 4:20 5:12 he'll 34:25 head 31:23 57:24 headset 70:9	health 29:7 hear 10:20 38:7 40:25 61:19 62:14 70:11,12 heard 10:5 27:1 29:6 59:18 68:20 69:18,21 hearing 2:1,4,4,8 2:14 3:1,11 4:1,8 4:19 5:1,11,18,22 6:1,7,13,19,19 10:13 22:11 24:15 27:12 30:12 34:21 35:8,23 38:12 39:23 40:1,4,6,10 53:11,24 56:1,21 64:10 65:14,19,20 65:24 67:14,14 68:13,13,14,16 69:5,8,15 hearings 10:10 heartened 33:13 held 13:6 22:20 22:23 35:14 68:15 help 22:5 53:9 68:18 henick 2:15 herrick 2:20,22 32:16 high 14:18,21 highlights 28:13 hitting 13:12 hoffman 9:8 hold 38:4 59:15 holdback 27:17 28:25 29:9,9 30:4 31:2 36:9,19 holdbacks 27:15 27:19 holdco 6:4,8,9,11 9:2 holding 1:7 47:10
g g 10:1 56:20,20 gamut 14:25 gap 27:23 28:7 30:9,10,16 34:9 garrett 7:8 10:19 26:25 28:8 gas 57:19 general 14:24 15:10 generally 28:4 35:14 39:17 getting 16:8 31:9 57:24 64:1 70:16 giant 16:2 give 50:11 55:9,13 56:8 62:1 68:11 given 27:13,20,22 30:8 34:25 48:13 49:6 52:25 60:7 giving 34:23 59:23			

holdings 5:4 6:3 9:9,16 10:3 37:3 38:11 hon 1:22 honor 10:19,23 17:13 18:5 19:13 20:7,24 22:13,22 23:16 24:3,5,11 25:18,24 26:1,10 26:25 27:6,8,18 29:17 30:23 31:19 32:8 33:9,25 34:3 34:4,13,15,16 36:21 37:5,11,14 38:2,5,9,10,13,19 39:22,24 40:11,17 40:19 41:5 42:20 44:2 45:6 46:17 47:1,12 48:22 49:1 50:25 53:4 53:23 54:11,14,18 59:17,22 61:1,12 61:18 63:6,17 64:12 65:6 68:7 68:19 69:17 71:12 71:12,17,25 72:1 72:5 honor's 49:8 53:6 53:8,11 65:4 hopefully 22:10 hyde 6:25 73:3,8	important 41:10 57:9 58:7 71:8 impose 71:1,5 imposed 30:6 impression 31:6,9 improperly 64:18 inability 60:24 inclination 39:9 inclined 39:20 60:2 include 22:8 included 14:23 15:1 16:18,25 28:15 34:21 includes 16:1 28:13 including 3:16 4:13 12:23 22:21 22:21 26:17 52:12 incmted 3:15 increase 16:15,15 17:16,21 23:19 increased 12:6,25 15:19,20,23 increases 35:18 incur 33:24 incurred 3:6 indicated 42:17 53:25 indication 46:14 68:21 indicative 53:18 53:20,22 55:9,13 indiscernible 11:15 27:20 30:5 30:5,9 56:4,4 individual 32:2 inform 66:4 information 39:18 initial 12:16 43:14 initially 41:11 insolvency 27:23	intended 43:24 interest 21:21,25 interfere 50:9 56:15 58:6 63:2 67:8 interference 50:21 interferes 63:4 64:10 interfering 62:10 interim 2:4,8,14 2:15 3:1,4,11,13 4:8,9 5:1,2,4 25:16 26:9 27:12 29:3,16,18 32:15 32:20,22,23 36:20 interpretation 67:1 interpretation's 52:3 interpreting 55:19 59:25 interrupt 29:20 30:1 37:6,16 59:18 60:13 inuring 39:24 invoke 53:10,16 involved 37:17 involvement 20:4 involvements 20:19 isolates 62:18 issuance 40:15 53:3 56:11 issue 27:2 28:24 29:12,16 30:7,24 45:9 46:13 50:7 54:6,19 55:13,19 56:9 57:4 59:4,7 62:19 63:3,5,7 64:6 66:20 67:3 issued 44:6 47:18 56:13 57:1	issues 27:1 28:24 30:2 33:7 41:24 50:15 56:1 63:13 65:15 67:19 69:5 69:23 item 21:3 25:15 36:25 49:7 items 37:12
j			
january 1:17 2:6 6:20 10:14,14 26:5 38:14 73:25 job 25:6 joint 3:2 69:13 jointly 24:16 judge 1:23 10:3 11:14 13:8,15 16:9 17:2 18:23 23:24 41:3 57:18 judgement 46:4,5 47:5,12,13 61:21 judgment 14:4 42:3,5,9,12,13 43:10,14,17,19 44:1,23 45:1,18 45:19 judgments 42:4 44:6 july 2:11,19 3:6 3:16 4:13 5:6 57:18 june 43:5 jurisdiction 44:8 57:22 67:4 jurisdictional 46:1 56:17 61:17 jurisdictions 16:20 21:19			
k			
k 37:22 keep 34:14 keeping 46:12			

<p>kept 68:3</p> <p>key 42:2</p> <p>kind 31:25 32:9</p> <p>knew 26:12 35:24</p> <p>know 12:7 13:9 13:11,19 14:18,23 17:4 18:20 19:1,6 19:14 20:18,22 21:5,7,8 22:20 23:20,22 27:20,24 28:1,14 30:2,8,14 30:15 31:10 32:11 33:25 34:7 44:10 50:9,12,19,19 52:20,23 53:13,23 54:5,8,8 55:15 56:2 58:19,20 60:23 62:15 65:11 65:15,20,21 66:19 67:5,9,23 68:10 68:18 69:7 70:10 71:5,7,9</p> <p>knowledge 16:19</p> <p>known 16:4</p> <p>krinsky 7:17 24:4 33:10</p>	<p>law 9:8 24:7 28:3 32:10 49:18,23 56:16,17</p> <p>lay 59:20,21</p> <p>lead 48:24</p> <p>leafing 42:23</p> <p>lease 6:2 37:2 47:25 48:6,17 49:7,9,10,16 50:11 51:19 52:11 52:23 54:10,21,23 56:4 58:8 59:16 62:15,21,22 63:9 63:10,20,22 64:19 65:15 67:7 68:5</p> <p>leased 49:25</p> <p>leases 55:16</p> <p>leave 6:8 34:18 49:20 66:22 67:10</p> <p>leaves 12:2 46:12 65:12,14</p> <p>led 35:18</p> <p>ledanski 6:25 73:3 73:8</p> <p>lee 67:16</p> <p>left 43:9 49:16,19</p> <p>legacy 57:16</p> <p>legal 32:11 73:20</p> <p>length 27:24</p> <p>letter 53:23 55:6 64:16</p> <p>letters 54:14</p> <p>letting 34:3</p> <p>levels 23:18</p> <p>lexus 56:22 57:17</p> <p>liability 14:20 16:16,22</p> <p>lien 16:2</p> <p>lies 43:21</p> <p>life 69:10</p> <p>light 26:22 48:13</p> <p>limitation 49:15 58:9,19 59:12</p>	<p>66:5 67:18</p> <p>limited 14:20 56:13</p> <p>line 15:18 16:1 26:12 33:17,19</p> <p>lines 12:1</p> <p>lingering 31:7,14</p> <p>literally 68:2</p> <p>litigate 23:16 50:18</p> <p>litigation 13:10 16:5,6 17:25 18:1 19:11 21:8 22:21 24:17,20 30:19,20 34:11 36:1,1,17 43:8 48:1,2,23 54:22 55:2 63:8 63:23,23 64:22 65:8 66:3,11 70:17,17</p> <p>litigation's 65:1</p> <p>litigations 36:4</p> <p>little 19:24 49:12 52:3 55:4,5 64:20</p> <p>live 66:24 67:4</p> <p>llc 2:9,12 6:3,4,8 6:11 9:2,9,16 37:3</p> <p>llc's 6:9</p> <p>llp 2:15,20,22 3:3 3:13,17,19 4:2,3 4:10,14,17,20,21 5:12,13 7:3,17 8:1 8:15 9:1,15</p> <p>logic 23:12 50:10 50:10</p> <p>long 25:1 43:2 45:1 47:17 49:15 50:1 52:18 54:8 70:18</p> <p>longer 42:19</p> <p>look 18:23,23 41:9 71:3</p>	<p>looked 14:23</p> <p>looking 23:18 24:23 31:5 42:22 60:9</p> <p>lose 51:20 52:15 54:10 66:25</p> <p>lost 42:15 44:16 45:21</p> <p>lot 15:4 28:1</p> <p>lots 71:5</p> <p>lower 15:4 35:21 35:22 56:14,25 61:20</p>
<p>l</p>			<p>m</p>
<p>l 56:20</p> <p>lack 39:25</p> <p>lacks 58:23</p> <p>laid 56:16 57:10</p> <p>landlord 49:6 50:1,9,19 65:17 67:20 68:3</p> <p>landlord's 66:11</p> <p>language 26:17 32:20 55:6</p> <p>large 13:23 18:18 36:15</p> <p>largest 19:19 21:15</p> <p>larkin 9:8</p>			<p>maintained 22:24</p> <p>major 36:1,3</p> <p>majority 12:2,2 20:3</p> <p>makers 58:2</p> <p>making 20:9 65:4</p> <p>mall 6:3 9:9,16 37:3,19 38:4,11</p> <p>man 71:25 72:5</p> <p>mandate 40:16 41:23 46:7 47:7,8 47:15,17 48:15 50:15 52:12 53:3 53:14 54:6,7,18 55:25,25 56:10,11 57:1,9 58:16 64:2 65:2 66:14,17</p> <p>manges 3:12,17 3:19 4:3,21 5:13 7:3 10:20</p> <p>march 18:13 23:2 41:2 43:12 56:22</p> <p>mark 19:3,23 20:12</p> <p>market 8:3 9:3 52:23 60:24</p> <p>marketing 60:4,8</p> <p>mart 37:22</p>

<p>martin 9:6 38:5,6 38:9 39:22,22 40:9,10,18 41:5,8 41:8 42:1,25 44:10 45:20 48:6 48:21,21 49:17 50:5,25,25 51:6,8 51:11,16,23 52:8 53:4,5,21 54:18 55:21,21 61:2 68:19,19 69:1 70:8,11,14 71:1 71:10,17,21 martin's 45:8 master 49:7,10 63:9,10 matter 1:5 37:18 37:19,20 39:15,16 42:18 58:13 matters 6:19 10:4 mattes 72:3 matthew 5:23 maximizing 20:19 mcmahon 41:3 mean 25:19 28:2 30:21 50:8,16,20 58:14 60:4 62:10 62:19,23 63:2 64:25 65:18 66:23 66:24 meaning 57:8 means 47:23 66:2 measure 36:15 meat 57:17 meet 22:3 69:11 meeting 15:21 meets 20:17 mention 24:23 mentioned 12:23 18:4 21:3 mere 57:21 merit 56:21</p>	<p>merits 29:13 43:8 45:21 milliken 56:20 million 12:20 14:17,20 16:11,11 16:14 17:6,10 18:2,11,14,16,24 19:23,24,25 22:1 22:22 24:8,9,13 25:3 28:14 33:21 34:22,24 mind 29:1 44:17 mineola 73:23 minimis 12:1,3,4 20:6 21:18 22:1 ministerial 57:7 minneapolis 9:11 minnesota 57:18 63:1 misleading 35:7 misplaced 64:3 missing 34:7 misspoke 53:21 mn 9:11 moac 6:2 9:9,16 37:2 38:4,11 39:6 41:12,16,21 43:4 43:14 44:12 49:6 49:19 55:16 56:7 57:11 59:11 61:4 61:8 moac's 43:5 64:16 modified 17:11 59:8 monetization 17:16,22 19:12 monetize 22:18 monetized 17:18 money 21:1 28:1 33:17,20,23 month 53:15 monthly 2:8 31:11</p>	<p>months 11:3 33:12 34:2,5,15 34:17 68:15 morabito 8:20 37:5,8,8 38:2 motion 4:1,19 5:11,18,22 6:1,1,7 6:7,9 37:1 38:4,15 38:24,24,25 39:1 39:2,6,11,20 40:13,14,20,21,23 41:3,12,15,17 43:1,3,5,16 44:16 48:14 52:11 53:2 54:24 55:11,24 57:9 58:15,22,25 59:1,1,3,6,7 64:16 65:1 66:1,14 67:11 motions 59:8 movant 59:4 66:4 move 17:1 22:11 36:5 57:25 moves 34:13 moving 12:8 14:5 mullin 8:8 mute 70:7,9</p>	<p>33:20 36:5 42:20 65:22 negotiate 21:11 negotiating 21:24 negotiations 23:8 neither 44:20,22 net 17:21,21 never 42:5 new 1:2 7:6,13,20 8:11 9:18 33:6,11 news 11:12 17:5 21:2 ninth 2:8 3:12 4:9 5:2 non 12:3,4,4 13:1 15:25 18:12 20:1 20:14 normally 35:13 norman 9:10 north 5:19,23 9:3 note 10:13 11:2 12:10 13:23 16:9 38:13 39:4,16 42:24 43:17 noted 26:4 notes 57:10 61:20 notice 2:4 6:19 notices 17:13 notify 59:4 november 54:14 number 5:18 11:19 12:2,6,24 13:1 14:18,18,21 15:5,14,19,23 16:2,8 18:23 23:8 31:20 33:19 37:12 42:8,11 47:17 49:2 numbers 12:13 17:23 nw 8:17 ny 1:14 7:6,13,20 8:11 9:18 73:23</p>
		<p>n</p>	
		<p>n 7:1 10:1 56:20 73:1 nature 27:14 55:11,17 necessarily 57:13 necessary 3:5,15 27:19 32:12 36:13 need 14:15 16:13 27:25 28:3,5 38:1 40:1 56:3 62:14 67:13 68:13 needed 13:2 33:17 40:3 49:3 68:8 needs 14:2 23:11 24:9 27:25 31:10</p>	

[o - passed]

Page 13

o			p
<p>o 1:21 10:1 56:20 73:1 objected 32:24 36:10 objection 4:1,19 5:11,18 13:18 15:12 25:21,23 33:2,7 34:14 39:8 39:11 54:25 55:4 objections 15:15 15:17,24 23:23 26:21 32:19,25 obligations 25:11 obtained 24:20 44:19 66:7 obviously 32:5,21 50:2 51:4,8,18,23 60:4 62:5 68:9 70:16 occasioned 64:2 66:11 occupancy 48:25 occur 17:9 48:17 48:24 occurred 19:12 41:21 66:2 october 2:11,19 3:6,16 4:13 5:6 offer 54:13,23 62:15 63:19 65:16 66:12 67:20 office 67:16 68:18 official 2:16 4:10 5:3 7:11 oh 25:18 ohio 56:20 oil 57:19 okay 10:2 14:10 17:1 23:25 24:21 25:13,14 27:7,11 32:14 35:9 37:14 37:25 38:3,17,20</p>	<p>38:23 40:8,12,24 41:7 45:4 52:8 61:16 65:10 70:7 71:20 72:2 old 73:21 omitted 43:11 44:1 omnibus 10:10 30:17 ones 45:5 ongoing 21:22 26:22 27:14 62:22 operation 44:5 opinion 57:16 62:1 69:22 opportunity 50:12 oppose 30:3 opposed 32:11,18 63:1 opposing 31:2 opposition 39:5 39:25 40:13 opt 11:18 12:3,4 12:25 13:1,18 14:9 18:12,12 20:1,1,14,14 33:14 34:25 56:22 opted 11:18,24 13:15 33:16,25 options 53:9 oral 40:25 49:23 52:21 order 6:1,13 10:9 20:24 22:9 26:17 27:3 29:10,14 36:23 37:1,20 38:14,18 39:3,10 40:9 41:1,10,13 41:19,23 42:6,10 42:13,14,18,18 43:3,5,20 45:13 45:17,20 46:3</p>	<p>47:2,3,10,14 48:5 48:8 49:1,8,9 50:9 50:17 51:9,24 52:21 53:7 54:3 55:19 57:23 58:1 58:5,7,13 59:24 59:25 62:6,6,18 63:7 66:6 67:2 68:8,11,17 69:21 71:8,9 ordered 41:2 47:22 orders 26:18 39:14 42:5 48:9 orient 4:5,23 5:15 7:18 24:4 25:22 32:24 33:10 original 42:9 43:4 originally 44:15 otsuka 9:13 38:10 38:11,19 39:23 40:17,18,19,19 44:17 45:4,6 46:17,22,25 47:11 56:6 59:17,22 60:12,20 61:1,11 61:17 62:8 63:6 63:14,17 64:7,12 64:24 65:3,11 68:7 69:3,17,17 70:2,6 71:24 outs 13:18 20:14 outstanding 14:2 15:6,13 21:10 overlapping 29:22 owe 18:25 19:5,6 19:7,9 owed 18:24 20:13 24:8 owner 55:21</p>	<p>p 7:1,1 10:1 p.m. 2:6 6:21 page 11:14 12:19 14:5,11 16:7 17:1 17:4,23 18:5,8 24:23 43:1 45:11 paid 12:1,20 14:15 15:11,11,22 24:10,19 28:10,14 29:3,3 35:1 paints 33:15 pandemic 50:5,6 papers 39:11 46:2 53:6 paragraph 26:19 26:20 41:20,22,25 42:1 45:11,13 46:10,11 47:16,20 51:24 parenthetical 43:11 park 7:12 part 33:4 47:7 64:14 67:5,6 participants 11:9 particular 31:24 particularly 39:16 57:8 parties 11:17 12:16,20 13:15,21 14:1 15:23 16:2 16:23 18:17 19:5 19:9 20:10,18 21:24 23:15 36:5 36:6 38:25 41:1 47:10 67:12 69:11 party 29:21 39:19 44:20,22 58:21 party's 44:11 passage 51:21 passed 33:12 42:14 45:1</p>

patterson 9:15 38:12 paul 3:2 8:13 pay 15:2 16:13 19:22,25 20:11,13 20:15 21:16,17,18 23:21 49:21 62:25 paying 20:6 payment 11:18 22:2 63:1 payments 20:10 62:23 pending 30:19,20 35:11 40:23 45:2 48:14 52:16 54:10 55:24 57:22,24,25 58:3,24 59:2,5 60:25 65:2 66:10 66:14 people 20:13 35:24 48:8 percent 11:22 14:14 19:3,6,6,8,8 19:23 20:3,12,15 20:15 21:17,17,17 22:4 29:9 perfect 13:20 perfectly 49:20 performance 67:25 period 2:11,19,20 3:7,17 4:13,15 5:6 5:7 14:3 15:5 19:12 36:10 45:1 52:1 59:9 61:4,15 66:16 67:21 70:20 periodically 10:9 periods 29:5 49:3 permission 37:13 38:16 perspective 50:19 petition 15:10 21:21 28:16,18,21	48:15 52:16 phrase 45:12 picture 33:16 piece 51:20 pipec 9:1 38:6 pitch 53:7 place 41:20 43:15 46:6 47:15,18 plains 1:14 plan 24:9,25 25:3 30:22 33:12,18 34:1 36:17 68:18 play 22:8 plaza 8:10 pleadings 38:23 pleases 41:5 plus 62:24 pm 1:18 72:8 point 10:18 13:12 13:19 21:7 23:6 23:10 27:17 28:25 30:4,11 31:1,1,8 36:13 43:18 45:5 45:15 46:1,16 47:1,11 48:20 52:10 53:4 55:1,5 55:10,14,20 57:21 58:7 59:14,22 60:1,14,21 61:2,7 61:11 63:12 65:23 66:18 68:9 70:15 71:2,16 72:4 pointed 45:20 pointing 44:4 61:12 points 41:22 45:7 46:9 54:25 population 14:21 portion 29:2 36:3 36:19 40:6 49:9 54:1 65:25 portions 6:8 38:25 39:7	position 55:9 positive 17:5 possibilities 53:1 possibility 48:11 48:15 possibly 34:18 post 15:10 21:21 28:18,21 35:12 52:17 posting 52:14 66:16 pot 14:19 25:3 potential 16:16 17:9,24 29:8 potentially 53:5 68:4 power 22:25 55:3 58:20 practice 69:8 pre 11:4 19:4,15 19:18 21:14 22:14 28:15 predicted 34:1 preface 25:20 preference 12:15 12:25 13:2 34:8 35:20 preferences 18:1 18:18 preliminary 32:1 32:9 56:9 premature 30:13 30:20 55:2 premise 50:16 59:12 premised 54:25 premises 60:24 prepared 64:9 prepetition 15:13 15:21 16:17,24 21:20 28:15,21 35:1,4	presentation 10:24 presentment 20:24 22:9 preserve 14:3 preserving 26:21 pressed 56:2 pressing 66:23 presume 27:2 pretty 30:14 32:4 46:14,23 55:15 56:16 57:5 prevailed 41:12 63:8 prevented 50:13 67:22 previewing 21:1 primarily 10:5 16:1 18:3 primary 16:15 prime 2:9,12 32:15 prior 16:18 22:10 24:15 26:18 35:10 39:23 61:21 priority 14:25 16:17,25 21:20 24:22 pro 14:19 38:13 probably 21:7 38:20 53:14 60:8 62:12 68:15 problem 26:17 33:5 41:19 53:10 procedure 42:11 43:22,24 44:5,25 53:17 68:17 procedures 39:1 proceeding 6:17 proceedings 37:21 72:7 73:4 proceeds 17:17
--	--	--	---

process 20:23 23:14 26:22 48:19 56:12,15 64:1,11 66:21 67:22	protect 44:18	range 29:7	reconciliation 24:25 25:6 35:5,5
producing 32:10	protracted 13:10	rata 14:19	reconciling 21:23
productive 35:17	provide 39:2 53:24 68:22	ratcliff 57:16	reconsider 47:6
professional 2:14 3:1,4,7,11,14 4:8 5:1,7 27:2 31:7	provided 36:16	rates 28:19	reconsideration 48:10,12
professionals 26:3 28:4,12,20 31:1 31:11	provision 10:17 47:25 49:12 61:24 70:15	ray 57:14,19	record 41:8 48:22 54:1,2 73:4
programs 22:2	public 39:12,16	rdd 1:3	records 16:19 31:5
progress 2:1 10:11 11:12 12:8 12:22 15:16 16:8 17:12 33:16,22	punchline 11:11	read 32:3 42:8,23 42:24 44:3 49:12 53:6	recoveries 34:8 35:21
prohibits 54:19	punchlines 16:7	reading 42:25 48:23	recovery 14:14 17:5 18:1 35:24
projected 17:25 35:21,22	purpose 59:3	real 13:14 17:14 21:20 67:23 68:2	redact 40:4
promise 13:21	purposes 16:24	realizing 35:15	redacted 39:12
promises 13:10	pursue 21:8 44:19	really 13:4 28:25 29:15 31:8 33:2 39:17 48:5 49:11 50:8 52:4 55:5,5 55:10,19 57:13 58:9 59:9 62:13 62:17 66:2,23,24	redacting 39:7
promptly 68:10	put 39:19 44:14 51:11,11 66:15	realty 57:14	redactions 39:4
pronounce 56:19	putting 61:23	reason 30:3 36:8 48:25 61:12 63:15	redirect 69:10
proper 65:7		reasonable 49:25 59:13 60:16 70:3 70:4 71:3,16	reduce 15:5 21:22 22:6
properly 36:7 59:4	quarropas 1:13	reasonably 60:17 69:20	reduced 13:7 34:24
property 49:10 51:20	quarter 12:22 31:21	reasoning 59:24	reducing 16:8
proposals 26:23	question 24:7 31:5 47:24 48:6 48:19 50:18 61:18 61:23 62:16 71:18	reasons 42:16	reduction 17:7 29:14
propose 19:20 20:6,23 22:8 25:24	questioned 55:7	recall 33:25	reductions 30:9
proposed 22:9 38:18 39:3 51:23 54:3 55:7,17 65:16	questions 17:2 18:5 23:3 24:1 26:2,12 37:12	receive 11:17	refer 40:2 45:19 46:5
proposing 19:23 20:10	quinn 8:15 37:8	received 10:13 12:16 17:19	references 48:3
proposition 57:6	quite 43:1 45:2 61:22 62:3,3	receiving 14:12	referring 24:14 64:14
prospective 60:17 63:21	quote 43:8,23	recognized 20:8 61:3	refers 48:1
	q	reconcile 15:1 25:12	reflected 24:18
	r	reconciled 13:3 13:16 24:24 25:2	reflects 67:2
	r 1:21 7:1 10:1 73:1		refuse 13:21
	raise 30:24 71:15		regard 10:12 24:22 25:8
	raised 45:9 46:1 67:20		regarding 26:18 63:9
	raises 59:3,7		regardless 48:4
	raising 30:7 32:1		rehearing 41:16 41:17 42:10,13
	rancheros 57:16		

<p>43:3,6,16 44:20 48:9,11 reimbursement 2:5,10,18 3:5,15 4:12 5:5 rejected 65:17 related 4:4,22 5:14,22 6:3 13:25 36:4 37:21 38:23 42:9 47:23 52:10 52:19 relation 27:15 relatively 23:8 release 37:2 relevant 40:4 relief 6:3 39:7 48:16 50:14 58:22 61:25 64:8,13 relies 56:25 57:5 reluctant 53:1 relying 16:23 47:16 remain 13:5,18 15:13 17:11 20:1 20:13 22:20 41:20 47:14 remainder 68:5 remained 43:15 44:24 49:19 remaining 12:19 15:7 17:10,14,19 20:14,16 21:9 36:3 remains 21:10 23:14 47:18 remand 48:11 remands 59:2 remarks 56:6 remind 28:10 remote 68:16 remotely 10:5 68:16</p>	<p>removal 48:11 remove 13:24 removed 15:9 62:17 rendered 2:10,18 3:5,14 4:12 reopen 39:15 rep 19:19 repeat 43:22 reply 24:16 40:23 45:11,12 53:11 56:24 57:4 report 10:11,17 11:4,8,11,25 12:5 15:16 17:6 18:3 23:4 26:5,6,14,20 28:13 33:15 reports 30:17 32:1,9 represent 6:16 representation 6:14 representative 8:16 11:6,7 22:15 37:10 representatives 25:6 representing 38:6 reprise 27:12 request 25:25 27:4 57:2 58:16 59:9 61:7 requested 36:20 47:8 requests 31:21 require 59:15 required 49:9 62:22 requirement 71:5 requirements 54:13 requires 65:23</p>	<p>reservation 32:20 reserve 14:7,8,9 18:16 33:4 reserved 33:5 reserves 16:8 17:7 22:23 resolution 48:2,3 48:23 70:18 resolve 16:5 resolved 13:17 resolving 12:7 15:17 17:8 21:5 resources 21:4,10 respect 17:17 24:16,20 25:10 37:12 44:21 59:9 respond 59:21 response 5:22 40:22 45:10 responses 25:22 rest 45:15 result 12:15 17:8 18:3,9 19:11 22:21,21 23:1 42:6 68:10 resulted 41:16 resulting 48:12 results 16:4,21 retained 6:16 rethink 47:6 retiree 24:24 25:5 retirees 14:22 returns 13:12,20 revenue 5:19,24 reverse 58:13 review 26:23 reviewed 25:16,20 26:4 32:18 33:3 38:23 39:3 revolving 12:8 richard 6:4,10 rid 15:15</p>	<p>right 12:18 16:12 25:14,18 29:17 31:4 35:20 38:7 40:24 44:9 45:16 47:9 49:22 51:5,7 51:10 52:2,21 54:23 56:5 60:6 60:11 61:10,16 62:14,23 63:19 65:10,12,16 66:12 67:20,21 68:25 71:23 rights 26:19 32:20 33:4,5 36:6 49:6 risk 52:14 rivera 56:18 road 73:21 robert 1:22 9:6 rockefeller 8:10 room 1:13 roughly 19:24 rule 40:15 43:21 44:5,25 48:14 53:2,16,17 54:1 55:3 57:11 58:2,3 58:21 62:12,13 65:25 67:10 rules 41:21 42:11 53:10 ruling 29:8 45:13 51:17 53:13,18,20 53:22 55:9,14 59:20 60:18 65:25 70:22 run 49:16 50:13 60:3 66:20 running 71:12,13 runs 54:12 66:25</p>
s			
<p>s 4:4,22 5:14,18 5:22 7:1 10:1 s&e 66:6</p>			

<p>sabine 57:19 sara 7:15 24:11 satisfied 11:21,23 20:2 49:5 51:24 54:13,15 62:3 65:9 satisfy 19:25 49:3 52:4 61:24 savings 21:13 saying 44:22 51:2 51:2 52:5 59:10 63:22 says 24:8 41:20,23 43:2 45:13,18 51:24 57:7 58:21 59:4 62:2 63:8 64:16 scenes 12:13 schedule 32:10 65:14 67:14 68:13 scheduled 6:19 65:19 schedules 36:23 scheduling 68:11 screen 10:6 26:13 sdny 57:15,20 seal 6:7,8 38:25 40:1 sealing 39:5,11 40:6,9 sears 1:7 5:4 10:3 72:3 second 14:4,5,11 16:2,4 40:21 41:18,21 42:2,17 44:3,7,11,13,21 45:3,14 46:7,13 46:21 49:7 51:14 53:13 54:6 55:4 55:23 61:3,5,13 64:25 68:21 section 11:16 15:3 15:4 36:11 48:1</p>	<p>49:7 52:20 62:17 secured 14:24 16:1 36:16 see 10:23 11:14,19 11:19,20,25 12:3 12:5,24 13:6 14:1 15:14,14 16:4,12 17:20,24 31:22,25 32:18 34:15 36:8 38:7 52:3 62:10 63:4 64:10 70:8 seeing 17:13 seek 56:1 seeking 39:15 48:16 64:8,13 seeks 54:24 61:22 66:1 seen 38:14 51:12 54:14 sell 52:23 sending 46:6 sense 23:22 32:4 50:15 53:16 60:6 sent 38:21 sentence 45:7 separate 29:12,13 30:7 43:18,19,25 50:7 63:2,5 64:5 69:15 71:14 separately 11:5 september 33:1 51:12 58:8 service 18:19 services 2:10,18 3:4,14 4:12 set 29:5 32:25 43:18,25 53:11 71:12 settle 13:21 settlement 14:17 35:25 settlements 12:15 12:16 17:9</p>	<p>seven 13:18 severance 15:18 15:20,21 25:9,11 severed 15:21 share 14:17,19 25:4 sheppard 8:8 short 32:10 56:5,7 shortly 14:15 36:24 38:21 show 6:13 37:21 showed 28:13 showing 16:11 17:5,7 shown 15:8 shows 15:12 17:9 18:14 side 12:19 signature 73:6 signed 6:13 49:9 60:5 significant 19:2,4 19:10 35:18 signing 72:3 similar 32:25 similarly 63:3 67:3 simple 36:15 simply 34:20 40:2 sit 23:10 sitting 61:9 situation 57:13 67:18 68:1 six 34:1 36:23 sixth 2:15 57:7 size 27:14,21 31:20 slightly 16:11,14 18:2,2 small 12:12 23:8 smaller 30:21 solutions 73:20</p>	<p>solve 53:9 someone's 39:15 sommer 5:23 son 6:15 37:23 sonya 6:25 73:3,8 sorry 14:6 25:19 29:20,23 30:1 37:5,6 40:19 53:21 58:14 64:12 sort 27:16 57:5 71:4 sought 39:7 44:13 61:5 sounds 51:2 53:5 sources 35:23 southern 1:2 sown 35:10 space 49:20 spahr 3:3 8:1 26:11 speak 13:8 speakers 29:22 special 2:16,20 specifically 24:20 49:4 speedy 57:3 spending 25:7 spent 15:4 60:7 staffing 32:6 stage 31:22 stages 32:13 stand 27:10 standards 36:11 standing 47:15 standstill 34:11 start 10:10,11 11:2,14 48:18,18 54:21 69:25 started 12:12 13:14 starting 50:11 70:21</p>
---	---	---	---

<p>state 22:8 59:1,3,6 63:1 66:3 state's 22:15 statement 2:8 25:20 56:25 states 1:1,12 56:17 statistics 19:14 status 2:1 10:11 10:13,14,17 11:15 23:4 26:5,20 33:15 stay 38:1 40:15 42:6 43:13,15 44:4,12,24 45:22 45:24 46:15 47:7 47:8 48:11,14 50:15 52:12,13,17 52:18 53:2,14 57:2,9,24,25 58:3 58:15 64:1 65:2 66:14,15,17 67:10 71:4 stayed 45:18 55:25 stays 46:4 54:7 step 56:12 steps 29:18 71:21 stipulated 47:10 stipulation 41:1 41:13 42:19 44:4 44:15 47:14,18 48:5 stopped 31:12 46:10 stopping 21:25 strauss 4:9,14,16 street 1:13 8:3,17 9:3 strong 43:22 46:14 stuck 34:19</p>	<p>subject 12:25 13:1 13:17,25 18:17 35:4,4 39:14 49:10 58:10,11 sublease 44:19 47:24 48:7,18 51:25 52:15,24 60:5,6 63:3 66:8,9 67:23 70:15 71:13 subleases 44:19 submit 20:23 36:22 49:5 69:13 submitted 10:8 51:13 55:11 substance 13:5 36:11 41:12 62:4 substantial 30:18 30:19 59:3,7 substantially 31:12 subtenant 40:3,3 55:7 60:9,10,17 62:16 63:21 64:17 64:18 65:17 70:19 70:21 subtenant's 55:12 55:17,18 suggest 21:11 suggesting 23:6 46:25 suggestion 43:23 suitable 60:10 66:21 suite 73:22 sullivan 8:15 summary 42:18 support 19:17 20:20 21:14 22:4 suppose 44:10 54:6 supreme 23:18 54:7</p>	<p>sure 10:16 23:5 26:3 30:14 31:6 31:13 33:2,6 47:23 54:11 55:13 57:11,12 59:19 61:18 62:12 69:19 symbol 70:8 t t 73:1,1 t'd 62:13 67:8 table 59:20 take 25:1 28:5 50:3 51:19 56:14 57:10 65:21 68:12 69:8 71:6,22 takes 54:8 70:18 talk 42:3 50:20 talking 29:23 34:23 talks 47:25 tap 36:18 tarter 7:17 24:4 33:9 tasks 27:16 tax 15:18,25 16:25 21:20 33:19 taxes 15:4,10 16:17 18:3 35:1,4 62:24,25 taxing 16:20 21:19 telephone 10:7 telephonically 7:8 7:15,22 8:6,13,20 9:6,13,20 tell 64:25 telling 50:19 66:19 67:17 tellingly 56:19 tenant 55:8 59:14 63:21 65:17 66:7 66:8,9,12,25 67:3 67:19,23 70:16</p>	<p>tenants 50:20 term 47:25 48:7 49:15 terminate 41:23 terms 13:15 17:11 17:22 28:19 47:13 60:1 61:17 62:15 testimony 50:1,3 69:9,14 thank 10:19 11:8 18:8 25:13,24 28:9 36:21 38:2,9 40:11 45:6 68:7 68:20 71:17,23,24 71:25 72:1,5,6 thanks 10:22 24:21 25:14 27:7 38:8 72:4 that's 52:2 they're 10:6 thing 40:13 62:11 66:8 things 47:17,19 52:13 53:6 58:17 60:1 63:6 71:6 think 13:8 20:17 20:24 21:16 22:5 23:17,23 27:19,25 28:5,23 29:6,12 30:13,20 31:2,22 31:23,24 32:18 35:17,18,24 37:17 37:19 39:16,25 40:5 41:9 42:2 46:10,14,18 47:6 49:13,24 52:3 53:7 55:9,14,15 56:10,11,14,15,18 57:4,8 58:6,10,11 58:17,19 59:8 61:22 62:11,12,13 62:18 63:13 64:2 64:5,23 65:13,13</p>
---	--	---	---

<p>65:22 66:3,13 67:1,4,9,12,15 68:8,9,20 70:7 71:2,8,18 72:2 thinking 59:21 third 18:25 34:22 thirds 19:7 thought 28:9 32:12 39:24 43:15 53:17 71:12 thoughts 53:25 56:9 thousands 13:14 three 25:21 34:17 36:9 46:10 47:16 47:20 threshold 22:4 ticket 30:19 36:2 tie 17:23 tied 36:3 tiktin 4:5,23 5:15 time 10:10 11:9 16:12,14 17:10,15 20:9 21:11 24:16 25:7 31:5 33:1,8 34:21 35:24 40:22 42:14 45:1,2,20 45:25 49:3,25 51:6,21 52:1,11 54:4,10 59:13 60:5,8,14,14 61:15 65:20 66:21 68:14 69:18,18 70:3,4,16,19 71:3 71:16 time's 12:6 timeline 53:16 70:17 timely 58:22 times 30:4 timing 56:2 tired 35:8</p>	<p>tobey 8:6 26:10 today 10:24 18:25 23:4,17 27:24 37:24 38:16,22 40:2 48:25 61:7,9 62:13 64:9 65:19 65:23 69:6 70:22 71:1 72:3 today's 10:13 11:11 40:4 today's 10:4 told 34:9 top 11:16 31:23 total 12:19 13:16 17:19 21:25 track 12:19 tracking 21:23 transaction 70:5 transcribed 6:25 transcript 33:3 40:7 49:14 52:20 53:25 68:10,23 69:20 73:4 transfer 48:10,12 transform 6:4,7,9 6:10 9:2 22:22 37:19 38:4,6 40:22 44:16 45:21 45:25 47:16,19 49:24 52:10 59:13 60:4,22 61:5,22 62:2,24 63:7,8 64:3 66:4,7 68:1 transform's 38:24 43:16 transforms 43:3 tremendous 16:7 18:22 trial 49:2 57:3 tried 39:6 trouble 27:9 true 69:24 73:4</p>	<p>trust 24:19 30:14 35:13 try 21:3 28:6 30:9 56:19 trying 13:20 turned 26:13 35:16 turning 27:9 two 11:14 15:3 19:7 28:23 29:23 30:2 42:11,16 45:8 49:4,14,25 50:3,3,11,12,18 50:21,22,22,23 51:3 52:1,18,22 53:5,9 54:4,4,20 58:9,19 59:9,12 59:12,22 60:2,7 60:21 61:3,15,24 62:24 63:13,16 66:5,10,16,19,20 66:25 67:18,19,21 68:3 69:21,22,24 70:22 tyler 9:15 type 50:14 55:8 62:11 68:23 types 39:14</p>	<p>61:1 63:12,12 64:24 65:3 70:22 71:19 understood 23:6 70:6 71:17 united 1:1,12 56:17 universe 15:1 unknown 16:21 unpaid 29:4 unredacted 39:2,4 unresolved 13:19 unsecured 2:17 4:11 5:3 7:11 14:24 update 2:1 10:13 10:14 23:25 26:7 26:14 35:10 updates 35:10 updating 21:24 35:3 usc 43:10 useful 58:17 uses 17:25</p>
			v
			<p>v 43:10 56:17,20 57:4,16 vacated 42:10 vacating 43:4 valid 44:24 63:10 valuable 51:18 various 17:13 20:20 22:5 28:11 42:11 48:24 52:13 58:17 vast 12:2 20:2 veritext 73:20 versions 39:12,12 versus 37:23 vice 38:14 video 27:9 view 26:8 27:13 29:7,16 41:6,9</p>

42:16 46:3 58:19 58:21 viewed 52:21 71:7 virtue 69:23 visa 52:11 vowed 23:15	webb 9:15 weeks 11:3 50:22 weil 3:12,17,19 4:3,21 5:13 7:3 10:20 25:22 26:25 27:1 28:8,9 32:23	52:18 54:4 58:9 58:19 59:9,12,22 61:4,15,24 62:24 62:24 66:5,16,19 67:18,21 69:21,22 years 49:16,21,25 50:3,4,11,12,18 50:21,23,23 51:3 52:23 54:4,9 59:13 60:2,7,21 63:16 66:10,20,25 68:3,4 69:24 70:23 york 1:2 7:6,13,20 8:11 9:18
w	went 33:3 we're 10:3 white 1:14 widowers 14:22 widows 14:22 wilmington 8:4 9:4 win 58:3 winimo 57:14 withhold 18:17 witness 69:10,14 woman 72:1,6 wondering 37:10 word 46:19 work 14:2 15:4 22:13 27:14 28:17 28:18 31:10 35:12 35:17,17 36:9,13 69:4 working 19:15 worried 30:6 49:4 worry 52:1 worst 55:3 worth 31:2 write 53:23 writing 68:23 written 69:21 wrong 59:11	
wait 21:9 walk 11:1,12 wander 7:22 24:3 24:3,7,13,22 25:8 25:13 33:3,9,9 35:20 want 23:5 25:5 29:17,24 30:25 31:6,13,14 37:22 40:13 45:4 51:19 52:9 54:9 56:5,6,8 59:17,20 63:15 64:17 65:18 67:8 68:11 69:4,16,19 70:22 71:1,6,7 wanted 26:12 30:24 34:13 44:14 59:19 62:25 71:10 wants 21:10 57:11 61:18,19 65:21 66:15 warrant 29:9 warranted 27:17 washington 8:18 waterfall 17:4 way 20:25 21:2 24:10 42:4,8 48:22 ways 18:23 22:16 we've 10:9 11:15 13:9,16 15:14,16 15:23 20:2,2 32:21 34:24 35:5 44:19 49:5 51:24 54:13,15	x x 1:4,10 y y 56:20,20 yeah 42:1 51:16 53:21 59:19 62:21 70:1,12,13 year 34:12 49:15 50:23 51:12 52:1	z zoom 6:20 10:5 38:12